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CLEG KELLY, ARAB OF THE CITY:

HIS PROGRESS AND ADVENTURES.¹

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ADVENTURE XIV.

CLEG TURNS DIPLOMATIST

JAMES CALLENDAR, honest man and pillar of the Seceder Kirk, was sitting down to his dinner when Cleg came to his door. The one servant lass whom the Callendars kept was 'tidying' herself for the afternoon, and very much resented having to answer the door for a ragged boy with bare legs.

'Gae 'way, we hae nocht for the likes o' you here!' said she, and would have shut the door upon him.

'No even ceevil mainners,' said Cleg, stepping lightly past her into the little side room, where he knew that Mr. Callendar ordinarily took his meals. The builder was just putting a potato into his mouth. He was so surprised to see Cleg enter unannounced, that the fork with the round, well-buttered, new potato remained poised in mid-air.

Cleg plunged into his affairs without preamble, lest he should be captured from behind and ignominiously expelled. But the trim servant merely listened for a moment at the back of the door, to make sure that the intruder had some genuine business with her master, and then returned to the graver duties of her own toilet. It was her evening out, and her 'young man' had hinted at a sail to Aberdeen on the pleasure-boat, if they could get to the West Pier in time.

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'Oh, Maister Callendar,' Cleg began, eager and breathless, 'ye hae been a kind man to me, and I want ye to help me noo——'

'What's this, Cleg?' said the builder; 'surely the police are not after you?'

Cleg shook his head.

'Nor your faither gotten off?'

Again and more vigorously Cleg shook his head, smiling a little as he did so.

'Oh, then,' said the builder, much relieved, carrying the suspended potato to his mouth, 'it can be naething very dreadfu'. But when ye came in like that on me, I declare that I thoct the wood-yaird was on fire!'

Then Cleg proceeded with his tale. He told how the Kavannahs had been deserted by their father, who had gone to look for work in Liverpool. He sketched with the inevitable realism of the street-boy the career of Sal Kavannah. He stated in plain language the fate that threatened Vara. He described Sal's treatment of Hugh.

'And she battered her ain bairn till the blood ran on the floor. She tossed the bairn against the wall till its arm was near broke. She never hears her wee bit wean greetin' for the milk without cursing it. Will ye turn them away to gang back to a'that?'

This was Cleg's climax, and very artfully he had worked up to it. The builder, good man, was troubled. The tale spoiled the relish of his new potatoes, and it was the first time he had had them that year. He turned with some little asperity upon Cleg.

'But I dinna see what I can do,' he said; 'I canna tak' them here into my house. The mistress wadna alloo it.'

It was the first time he had referred to the ruler of his fortunes, who at that moment was declaring to an acquaintance that she paid two shillings a week less for her rooms than her friend in the next pew at church. 'And how she can afford it is mair than I can tell.' It was no wonder that honest Mr. Callendar said that his wife would not allow him to bring the Kavannahs within his door.

'But,' said Cleg, 'if you will let them bide in the auld hut at the back o' the yaird, where naebody gangs, I can easy get ither lodgings. They'll meddle wi' naething, and I ken whaur to get wark for the lassie, when she's fit for it.'

Mr. Callendar considered. It was a good deal to ask, and he had no guarantee for the honesty of his new tenants but the good word of the son of a thief who had squatted on his property.

'Weel, Cleg,' he said at last, with his quiet humoursome smile coming back to his lips, 'they can bide, gin ye are willing to come surety for them.'

Cleg jumped up with a shout and a wave of his bonnet, which brought the trim servant to the back of the door in consternation.

'I kenned ye wadna turn them awa'—I kenned it, man!' he cried.

Then Cleg realised where he was, and his enthusiasm subsided as suddenly as it rose.

'I shouldna behave like this on a carpet,' he said, looking apologetically at the dusty pads his bare feet had left on the good Kidderminster.

He was on the eve of departing when the builder called him back. He had been turning things over in his mind.

'I hae anither wood-yard doon by Echo Bank,' he said. 'There's a cubby-hole there you could bide in, gin ye had a blanket.'

'That's nocht,' answered Cleg, 'in this weather. And thank ye kindly. I can do brawly without a blanket.'

And he sped out as he came, without troubling the maid, who was wearying for her master to be done with his dinner and take himself away to his office.

The good news was conveyed directly to Vara, and then she set Cleg's hut in order with a quieter heart. Cleg showed them where to get water, and it was not long before the bairns were established in a safety and comfort they had been strangers to all their lives.

But Cleg was not done with his day's work for the Kavannahs. He went down to the Hillside Works and saw the watchman, after he had delivered his tale of evening papers.

'D'ye think,' he said diplomatically, 'that there's ony chance for a lassie to get wark here?'

The watchman shook his head.

'There's nae room for ony but the relations o' them that's workin' here already.'

The watchman could be as diplomatic as Cleg. He had daughters of his own growing up, and, though he was willing to be a friend to Cleg, it was against his principles to encourage the introduction into 'our works' of alien blood. There was a tradition at Hillside that every old servant got his daughters 'in' as a matter of course. Indeed, matrimonial alliances were often arranged on that basis, and the blessing of children was looked upon as equivalent to the supreme blessing of money in the bank.

'But I dare say ye nicht see Maister Donald,' said the watchman, relenting. He remembered that he had no daughters that could be ready for a few years yet; and besides, Cleg was a good friend of his. 'But what ken ye aboot lassies? My sang, but ye are early begun, my lad. Ye'll rue it some day.'

Cleg smiled, but disdained an answer. He was not argie-bargiein' at present, as he would have said. He was waiting to get a job for Vara Kavannah. In another minute he found himself in the presence of Mr. Donald Iverach, junior partner in the firm of Iverach & Company, whose position in the paper trade and special eminence in the production of the higher grades of foreign correspondence were acknowledged even by rivals—as the senior partner wrote when he was preparing the advertisement for the firm's yearly almanack.

Mr. Donald Iverach was not in the best of humours. He had hoped to be playing 'pocket-handkerchief tennis,' of which he had grown inordinately fond, upon the lawn of Aurelia Villa. But it so happened that he had been required to supply his father upon the morrow with important data concerning the half-yearly balance. For this reason he had to remain in the dreary office in the South Back. This jumped ill with the desires of the junior partner, who was at present so very junior a partner that his share of the profits was only a full and undivided fiftieth—'amply sufficient, however,' as his father said many times over, 'and much more than ever I had at your age, with a wife and family to keep.'

'I wish I had!' said the reckless Donald, when he had heard this for the twentieth time, not knowing what he said.

'Donald, you are a young fool!' said his father. Which, of course, materially helped things.

Now the temper of Mr. Donald Iverach was specially tried on this occasion, for he had good reason to believe that a picturesque cousin of Cecilia's from London, who had been invalided home from some ridiculous little war or other, was playing pocket-handkerchief tennis at Aurelia Villa that evening in place of himself.

So his greeting to Cleg was curt indeed, as he looked up with his pen in his fingers from the last estimate of 'goods returned damaged'—an item which always specially annoyed his father.

'What do you want, boy?' he said, with a glance at the tattered trousers with one 'gallus' showing across the blue shirt, which represented Cleg's entire summer wear.

'Hae ye ony licht job ye could gie a clever and wullin' lassie

the morn?' said Cleg, who knew that the way to get a thing is to ask for it.

'What lassie?' said the junior partner indifferently.

'A lassie that has nae faither or mither,' said Cleg—'worth speakin' about,' he added as an afterthought.

'We are full up,' said Donald Iverach, balancing himself upon one leg of his stool. For his father was old-fashioned, and despised the luxury of stuffed chairs as not in keeping with a sound, old-fashioned conservative business.

Cleg looked disappointed.

'It wad be an awsome graund thing for the lassie if she could get a job here,' said Cleg sadly.

'Another time,' replied the junior partner, turning to his desk. To him the case and application were as fifty more. He only wished the manager had been at hand to refer the case to. Donald was like most of his kindly fellow-creatures. He liked to have his nasty jobs done by deputy. Which is one reason why the law is a lucrative profession.

Cleg was at the door, his head sunk so low that it was nearly between his feet. But at the very out-going, with the great brass handle in his fingers, he tried once more.

'Aweel,' he said, without taking his eyes off the brown matting on the floor, 'I'll e'en hae to gang and tell Miss Tennant aboot it. She wull be desperate vexed!'

The junior partner swung round on his stool and called, 'Hey! boy, stop!'

But Cleg was already outside.

'Call that boy back!' he shouted to the watchman, leaping to the door with sudden agility and astonishing interest.

Cleg returned with the same dejected mien and abased eyes. He stood, the image of sorrow and disappointment, upon the cocoa-nut matting.

'Whom did you say you would tell?' said Donald Iverach, in a tone in his voice quite different from his business one.

'Only Miss Tennant—a freend o' mine,' said Cleg, with incomparable meekness and deference.

'Miss Tennant of Aurelia Villa?' broke in the eager youth.

'Aye, juist her,' said Cleg dispassionately. 'She learns us aboot Jacob and Esau—and aboot Noah,' he added as if upon consideration. He would have mentioned more of the patriarchs if he could have remembered them at the time. His choice of names

did not spring from either preference or favouritism. So he added Noah to show that there was no ill-feeling in the matter.

‘And Miss Tennant is your friend?’ queried the young man.

Cleg nodded. He might have added that sometimes, as in one great ploy yet to be described, he had been both teacher and friend to Miss Celie Tennant.

‘Tell your lassie to be here at breakfast-time to-morrow morning, and to be sure and ask for Mr. Donald Iverach,’ was all the junior partner remarked.

And Cleg said demurely, ‘Thank you, sir.’

But as Cleg went out he thought a great deal of additional matter, and when he said his adieus to the watchman he could hardly contain himself. Before he was fairly down the steps, he yelled three times as loud as he could, and turned Catherine-wheel after Catherine-wheel, till at the last turn he came down with his bare feet in the waist-belt of a policeman. The good-natured officer solemnly smacked the convenient end of Cleg with a vast plantigrade palm, and restored him to the stature and progression of ordinary humanity, with a reminder to behave—and to mind where he was coming if he did not want to get run in.

But even this did not settle Cleg.

‘O Keelies!’ he cried, as if he had been addressing a large company of his fellows, ‘wasna it rare to see him loup off that stool, like a yellow paddock into the canal.’

And Cleg, who scorned the eccentricities of love in more mature bosoms even when he traded upon the resultant weaknesses, went off into an ecstasy of mocking laughter.

ADVENTURE XV.

THE FIRE IN CALLENDAR’S YARD.

VARA KAVANNAH went daily to the factory at Hillside. She was but a slip of a thing, yet she soon learned the work that fell to her share, and developed marvellous quickness in passing the thin quires of foreign paper, examining them for flaws and dirt, and rejecting the faulty sheets.

The girls were mostly kind to her, though they teased her about her name. And, indeed, in a world of Maggies and Jeanies, her Christian name appeared somewhat strange. But Vara had a

reverence for it, because it had been her single legacy from her father, the gentle and imaginative Sheemus, who had found married life so different from his hopes that he had been brought at last to try that bitter pass of flight, through which so many have gone to find a new life on the other side.

These were pleasant evenings in the wooden hut. Cleg generally dropped in to see his sub-tenants after his papers were delivered. Then he would potter about, watering the flowers, which now began to bloom bravely in spite of the city heat and the dust of the yard. Vara had a seam or a stocking, and sat at the outside of the door on a creepie stool.

Hugh learned to nurse Gavin on his knee or to rock him in the old cradle which the kindly foreman of the yard, a widower, had lent to Vara, saying, 'I'm no needin' it the noo—no for a year or twa at ony rate.'

He was a 'seeking' widower, and did not make the presentation absolute because he was a far-sighted man, and one never knew what might happen. As for Vara, she seemed to shoot up in stature every day, and the curves of her wasted and abused body filled out. Her face again grew merry and bright, and she was ready to take her share in mirthful talk. But sometimes her eyes were sad and far away. Then she was thinking of her father, the gentle Sheemus; and she longed greatly to go to meet him in Liverpool, when the ill days should have overpassed and there was no mother any more in her life.

In the Works Vara gained the friendship of her companions, though she was younger than most of them. A tall girl, who was much looked up to in the mill because she sang in a choir, stood firmly her friend. And the two, Agnes Ramsay and little Vara, used to walk home together. Vara was anxious that Cleg should apply for a situation for himself at the Works; but Cleg preferred his untrammelled freedom, and continued to deliver his papers and sleep in the yard at Echo Bank all through the summer.

It was mid-August and the sky shone like copper. There was a peculiar dunness in the air, and light puffs of burning wind came in, hot and unrefreshing, from the walls and pavement in the afternoon. But when the girls came home 'on the back of six,' as they said, the air had grown cooler, and Agnes and Vara often lingered a little in the great 'saal,' or work-room, in order to let the press of girls well down the street before them, and so be rid of the rough chaff of the lads as they passed home.

But this evening, as they came leisurely out, arm linked in arm, Vara saw a great crowd blocking up the way in front of the clock which gave the time to the works, and with a quick clutch at her companion's arm she would have drawn her away.

But Agnes Ramsay saw a woman furiously attacking the manager, and pushed forward to get a better view. Vara knew too well what it meant. Her enemy had found her. She tried to steal away, but it seemed impossible to move. With a cry of anger Sal Kavannah recognised her daughter, and threshed a way through the crowd to reach her. Vara stood still, white to the lips. Her mother seized her by the neck of her dress and began to shake her, striking her about the face and shoulders with foul names and blasphemous words.

'Brazen besom,' she cried; 'you and your "Keelie" stole my bairns frae me. Where have you hidden them? Ye think I canna find oot. But I can track them as I tracked you. Aff wi' that dress, you slut. It's ower guid for the like o' you, and me trapesin' in a gown like this. Take it off, I say, and give me back my children.'

Vara stood mute and silent under the storm of oaths. The manager would have sent for the police, but knowing that Vara was a *protégée* of Mr. Donald's, he went within, leaving them (as he said) to fight it out.

Then Agnes Ramsay pulled the shrinking girl away from her mother, and so turned the abuse upon herself. But Agnes was a well-grown girl, and, being supported by half-a-hundred of her companions, she stood her ground valiantly.

'Run,' she said, 'run, lassie, while ye can. She doesna ken yet where ye bide.'

So like a hunted hare Vara turned and ran. But when she reached the little wooden house, so trim and quiet, with its fragrant wood-yard about it, and the daisies and pansies in the little plots and diamond-shaped patches which Cleg had made, the bitterness of her heart broke up within her, like the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep.

Little Hugh came trotting to her, waving a red flag, the latest gift of the widower foreman, in his hand. 'Vara, Vara,' he cried, 'Gavin can say "Dadda," and I nursed him good as gold all day.'

The tears were running down Vara's face. She went in without power of speech and sat by the babe's cot. He was asleep, and she laid her wet cheek on the pillow beside his and sobbed. Hugh

kept a little way off, not knowing what to make of the unknown sorrow. Then he came softly up to her, and gave her sleeve a little pull.

‘Vara,’ he said, ‘here’s a seetie.’

For Hugh understood no sorrow which a sweetie would not make better.

‘I can never go back to the Works,’ sobbed Vara. ‘I am disgraced before them all. I can never face them—never!’

About seven Cleg came over the waste ground joyfully, having disposed of his papers. He sat silent while Vara told him of the terrible evening at the gate of Hillside, and of all her shame and terror. Cleg whistled very softly to himself, as he always did when he was thinking deeply.

‘Wait here this ae nicht,’ he said. ‘I am watching with anither man at the corner o’ the Grange where they hae the road up. I’ll think it oot in the shelter. Keep up your heart, Vara—we’ll win through yet.’

But Vara would not be comforted. She would not even raise her head to bid him say ‘Guid nicht.’

So, still more softly whistling, Cleg departed.

He was not great company that night for the man in the shelter, one ‘Tyke’ Tweedie—a man who had once been a soldier for three months, before being bought off by his father, who had regretted the transaction ever since. ‘Tyke’ was a man of battles. By his own account he had been in the Crimea. He was great upon ‘the Hichts o’ Almy.’ He described the joint career of himself and the victorious Sir Colin Campbell, concluding his epic with, ‘Then we charged the enemy and carriet a’ afore us, till we garred the Russian chieels rin like stour!’

But Tyke had a poor listener that night, though he never knew it. For Cleg sat silent, and only by a nod did he acknowledge his interest when Tyke had come to the crisis of one of his famous narrations.

The policeman on the beat would sometimes stop and look over the windward edge of the shelter. ‘Hae ye gotten to the battle o’ the Inkermann yet?’ he would ask.

‘Na, Rob,’ Tyke would reply, ‘we are aye on the Hichts o’ Almy yet! Dear, sirce, but it was a sare, sare job. Ye see, there was me and Sir Colin, and wi’ that we at them sword in hand——’

And the policeman would stroll away from the glow of the fire, out under the stars—alone save for the transient rake-hell cat

skirmishing across from area-railing to area-railing, and the tramp of a brother officer coming up sombre and subdued from far down the hill.

But about one of the clock, when the night was verging to its stillest, Cleg looked up and saw the stars overhead thinning out.

'It's never morning already!' he said, rubbing his eyes, for he had not half solved the hard problem of Vara Kavannah.

He stepped out of the shelter. All the heaven to the north was a-flicker with the skarrow of fire.

Without a word to the now drowsy Tyke, nodding over the blackening cinders in his grated brazier, Cleg Kelly set off at his top speed towards the fire, to be in at the death. 'It's surely in the Pleasance,' he said to himself as he ran. The flame towered mightily clear and clean, without sparks or crackling as when houses burn.

'It's Callendar's yaird!' said Cleg again, and never in his life had he run so fast. For there in the midst of the timber was the little wooden house in which were lying asleep little Vara Kavannah and her baby brothers.

It was indeed Callendar's wood-yard. When Cleg arrived there were whole regiments of firemen playing upon the flames; but his experienced eyes saw at once that the case was hopeless. Indeed, the officer in charge had come to the same conclusion some time before, and he was now directing the solid streams of water towards such surrounding properties as seemed in danger of catching fire.

The crowds were kept back by police, and all was orderly. The owner of all stood patiently at the gate, talking matters over with his foreman. After all, it was the visitation of God, and, further, he was fully insured. It is a great thing to be prepared for affliction.

Into the black mass of the onlookers Cleg darted. He wormed his way round to the back. He crossed a wall on which three or four boys were roosting.

'Ye'll get nabbed if ye gang that road,' cried one of them, giving Cleg 'the office' in the friendliest way, though he belonged to quite another gang.

But Cleg sped on. He dived between the long legs of his former friend, the red-headed officer known as 'Longshanks.' He skimmed across the yard among the falling sparks, dodging the

flames which shot out of the burning piles to intercept him, as if they had been policemen.

The little wooden house lay before him in the red heart of the fire. He saw the daisies growing in his own garden plots. He remembered that, in the hurry and distress of listening to Vara's story, he had not watered them that day.

But he dashed for the door, opened it eagerly, and fell forward across the floor. The hut was filled with the odour of burning. Shooting flames met him in the face as he rose; but nevertheless he groped all about the tiny room, getting his hands and arms burned as he did so. The children were not there—Vara, Hugh, and the baby—all were gone! He turned to the door. The thing that he had stumbled over was a body. He turned over the lump with his bare foot. It was soft, heavy, and smelled of whisky. Cleg had found Sal Kavannah in the home he had made to protect her children from her search. He had little doubt that it was she who had set the yard on fire and stumbled in here afterwards.

Cleg stood a moment wondering whether he would not do better to leave her where she was; and more than once since that night has the same thought crossed his mind. He still fears that in dragging her away by the feet from the burning hut he unduly interfered with the working of the designs of an all-wise Providence.

ADVENTURE XVI.

IN THE KEY OF BOY NATURAL.

IN time and under a new superintendent Cleg Kelly went back to Hunker Court Sunday School, some time after the loss of his friends the Kavannahs. This is equivalent to saying that Hunker Court became again an exceedingly lively place of instruction and amusement on a Sabbath afternoon. It is true that Cleg was not always present, and when he was absent his teacher's heart sent up a silent thanksgiving. That, of course, was before Miss Cecilia Tennant took him in hand.

Cleg had several teachers before he found his fate. He was, in fact, the crux of the school, and every aspiring young neophyte who 'took a class' was provided with a nut to crack in the shape of Cleg. But he never cracked him.

The superintendent of Hunker Court at the date of this first

pilgrimage was a somewhat ineffective gentleman, whose distinguishing trait was that he appeared to be of a pale sandy complexion all over. That is, all of him not covered by a tightly-buttoned black surtout. His name was Samson Langpenny. Why it was so, is historically uncertain—'Langpenny,' probably, owing to his connection with his father. But 'Samson' is wholly inexplicable, and was certainly exceedingly hard upon Master Langpenny as a boy. For it procured him many lickings at that delightful season, owing to logic of the usual schoolboy type and cogency.

'Jock, ye dinna ken wha was the strongest man?'

'It's a lee, I do ken. It was Samson!'

'Na, then it juist isna, for I lickit Samson this mornin mysel!'

The second boy thought this over a moment—saw it—considered it rather good.

'Dod,' he said, 'I wad like to could say that mysel'. I can lick Samson mysel' as weel as Pate Tamson!'

Whereupon he went and lurked for Samson till that unfortunate youth came along. Then he triumphantly established his claim to be the strongest man by once more thrashing 'Samson' Langpenny, while the tears of the first combat were hardly yet dry upon the cuff of the coat-sleeve which Master Langpenny ordinarily used instead of a pocket-handkerchief.

It was quite in accordance with the contrariness of things, that Samson Langpenny should develop into the superintendent of the roughest Sunday School in all the South Side of Edinburgh. He had now a real handkerchief, as every one might see, for he wore about equal parts of it within his pocket and without. The lower and unseen portion was the working end. Now, there may be excellent moral purpose in a judiciously-used pocket-handkerchief. There is, indeed, a certain literary man whose wife avers that her husband's toilet consists ordinarily of 'four paper knives, four pens, and no pocket-handkerchief.' But this person is not usually held up in Sunday Schools as a shining example. Quite the contrary.

Now, Cleg Kelly had no great personal grievance against his superintendent. But he said in his vulgar way (for there is no doubt that he was that kind of boy) that 'he did not cotton to that wipe o' Langpenny's!'

Cleg's present teacher was a young gentleman of the name of Percy Somerville, whose principal reasons for teaching in Hunker

Court were that he might improve the minds of the youth of the district, and that he might have a fair chance of seeing Miss Cecilia Tennant home across the meadows. This last was a pleasant thing to do at any time, but specially desirable in the summer season, after the heat and turmoil of Hunker Court. And, on this account, Samson Langpenny never lacked for recruits to his teaching staff at that time.

Now, Percy Somerville was 'a very nice boy'—these were Miss Tennant's own words. 'But, you know—well, you know—after all, he is only a boy.'

And, in addition, as they say in political circles, when the leadership of the party is in question, 'there was no vacancy.' The junior partner still lived.

Now Percy Somerville undoubtedly had his troubles, owing chiefly to Celie Tennant's hardness of heart; but they were as nothing to the difficulties which afflicted Samson Langpenny.

For instance, it was in this wise that Mr. Percy Somerville was greeted, as he appeared with a reluctant scholar who had been detected in trying to escape by the side door after the roll had been marked. (It was drawing near the time of the summer treat into the country, so it behoved the teachers to be careful in marking attendances.)

'Go it, Pierce-eye! Hit him one in the eye!'

This exclamation was traced afterwards to Cleg Kelly's acquaintance in day-school with a baleful ballad included in the *Royal Poetry Book*, and intituled 'Chevy Chase.'

Mr. Somerville thereupon promptly lost his rightful and given name, and became to all eternity—or so long, at least, as he remained at Hunker Court—'Old One-in-the-Eye.'

But it so happened that, on this particular Sunday, Cleg's teacher with the pugnacious title was absent; and, in despite of the notice prominently placarded on the walls behind the superintendent's desk, he was absent without having provided a substitute.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but that Samson Langpenny should take the class himself. And he would as soon have faced a battery of artillery as a class in which sat the Egyptian plague of his school, Cleg Kelly. It was, indeed, on this particular day that there came to Samson the resolution to try him with Miss Celie Tennant as a last resource, previous to a second and final expulsion.

Indeed, he would have chosen the latter alternative long ago, but for a well-grounded inward belief that, at the close of the hour after Cleg's compulsory exit, there would not be a whole pane of glass in all the many windows of Hunker Court Sunday School. He remembered well as a teacher the awful scene which accompanied the first expulsion under the reign of 'Pund o' Candles'—a scene which since his return had made Cleg almost idolised by the scholars of Hunker Court.

Samson Langpenny sat down to teach the Border Ruffians of the Sooth Back—Cleg Kelly's class. Now he was out of place, and knew it. His true sphere in a Sunday School was in the infant department; where, with a packet of butterscotch and 'Hush-a-bye, Baby!' he might have been a great and shining success.

Why the minister did not see this was a standing problem in Hunker Court. But, as the teachers said one to another on their several ways home:

'It is so hard to get the minister to see anything—and as for his wife—'

'Can you say your Psalm—metrical version?' asked Samson Langpenny, as though of a certainty they were all letter-perfect in the prose version.

'I can,' said Cleg Kelly promptly.

'Then,' said Samson, smiling, well-pleased, 'we will take you last.'

With various hitches and shoves, the awkward and unruly class bored its way through the Psalm—'metrical version.' An impartial observer might have noticed that the teacher contributed about ninety-five per cent. of the recitation in the form of hints and suggestions. Nevertheless, each boy, having completed his portion, sat back with a proud consciousness that he had done his duty with even needless promptitude and accuracy. Also it was an established canon of the place that so soon as each boy was released from the eye of the teacher, he instantly put his hand slyly under the bench. Then he either nipped his neighbour in a place which made the sufferer take an instant interest in the circumstance, or else he incontinently stuck a pin into him.

In either case the boy assaulted remarked: 'OUCH! please sir, Tam Rogerson's nippin' me. Wull ye speak to him?'

But this was only the usual routine, and provoked no remark.

When, however, the superintendent came to Cleg Kelly, and that diligent young student began at once to reel off the twenty-third

Psalm with vivacity and despatch—the psalm which the entire body of Scottish youth learns long before the A, B, C—it was obviously time to interfere.

‘If ye please, sir (or whether or no), that’s no the richt yin!’ said Tam Rogerson, who ran Cleg close for the place of honour as the ‘warst loon i’ the schule!’ This was a post of as great distinction at Hunker Court as the position of clown in a circus.

Cleg’s answer was twofold.

To Tam Rogerson he remarked—under his breath, it is true, but with startling distinctness—

‘Wait till I get you oot, ma man; I’ll warm you.’

And Tam Rogerson grew hot from head to foot, for he knew that he was as good as warmed already.

On the other hand, Cleg gave the answer of peace to his teacher:

‘Please, sir, Maister Langshanks—penny, I mean—my faither is a Papish—an’ he winna let me learn ony ither psalm but the three-an’-twunty. But I hae learned HER to richts!’

After this exhibition of the rights of the nonconforming conscience in strange places, Cleg continued his lesson in Hunker Court under the vague tutelage of Samson Langpenny. Now Samson was unaware of the strong feeling of resentment which was gathering in the bosoms of his scholars, owing to the length of his ‘introductory exercises.’ The Psalm and the ‘questions’ were all in the day’s work, but Samson introduced a prayer in the middle of the teaching hour, which Cleg Kelly considered to be wholly uncalled for and indeed little short of impious.

So, as soon as Samson shut his eyes, Cleg silently joined the class nearest him, and the other scholars of the absent Mr. Somerville did likewise. When Samson opened his eyes and awoke to the state of the case, he found himself wholly without a single scholar to whom instruction could be given.

Cleg had betaken himself to the class of Miss Robina Semple, an excellent maiden lady of much earnestness and vigour. She was so busy explaining the Scripture lesson, that she did not at first observe the addition to the number of her scholars in the wholly undesirable person of Master Kelly.

The lesson was the parable of the lame man at the pool of Siloam.

Now in Miss Semple’s class there was a lame boy named Chris Cullen. He sat listening with strained attention and invincible eagerness to every word which fell from his teacher. Cleg, to whom

all lessons were much alike, listened also—chiefly, it may be, because he saw the reflection of an angel's smile on the face of the lame boy, Chris Cullen.

'What gars ye hearken like that, Chris?' whispered Cleg, with some anxiety. Only the news of a prize fight would have brought such an expression of interest to his own face, or (it might be) the announcement that his father had got ten years.

'It's aboot a man that got a dook, an' then he could walk!' said Chris, speaking hurriedly over his shoulder, being anxious not to miss a word.

'What hindered him to dook afore?' asked Cleg.

'He couldna get doon to the water-edge,' said Chris.

'Was the bobby there?' persisted Cleg, to whom the limit of where he might not go or might not do coincided with the beat of the officers of Her Majesty's peace.

'*Wheesht!*' interjected Chris Cullen, 'she's telling it the noo!' For the lame boy, his teacher existed for this purpose alone.

The calm, high voice of Miss Robina Semple went on—Robina Semple, whom some called 'a plain old maid'—

'And so the poor man, who had no one to carry him down to the edge when the angel troubled the water, had to stay where he was, and somebody else got in before him! Are you not sorry for him?'

'Never heed, Chris Cullen,' broke in Cleg, 'I'll cairry ye doon on my back mysel'! There's naebody will daur to hinder ye dookin' in ony dub ye like, when I'm cairryin' ye!'

Cleg Kelly was certainly acquiring, by contact if in no other way, certain Christian ideas. For the rest he was still frankly pagan.

Now at this particular date Hunker Court Sabbath School was run under a misapprehension. It was the idea of the superintendent that a little sugared advice would tame the young savages of the courts and wynds. Hence the hour of instruction was largely taken up with confused sound and fury. Samson would have been wiser if he had suborned a prize-fighter of good moral principles to teach the young idea of Hunker Court how to shoot head foremost out at the door. Under these circumstances it is conceivable that some good might have been done. But as it was, under the placid consulship of Samson Langpenny, teachers and scholars alike had a good deal of physical exercise of an interesting and healthful sort. But the moral and religious improvement was certainly to seek.

Yet in the class of Miss Semple, that excellent woman and good teacher of youth, there was one scholar who that Sunday had heard to profit. It was Cleg Kelly. He carried home little Chris Cullen on his shoulders, and if no angel stirred the waters of the gutter puddles as these two went their way, and if no immediate healing resulted, both Chris and Cleg were the better for the lesson of the troubling of the waters.

Even Samson Langpenny did not go to Hunker Court that day in vain, for he went along with Chris and Cleg part of the way home. Pride was not among Samson's failings, and, as we know, bashfulness was equally absent from the black catalogue of the sins of our hero.

'What for are you carrying Chris?' asked Samson Langpenny, who, though he had many weaknesses, had also large and sufficient virtues of earnestness and self-sacrifice.

'Weel, ye see, sir,' said Cleg, trotting alongside cheerily, his burden upon his shoulders, 'it's true that Chris can gang himsel'. But ye ken yersel' gin the laddies are verra ceevil when they get oot o' schule. They micht knock the wee yin ower. But when he is up on my shoother, they juist darena'. My certes, but I wad like to fa' acquaint wi' the yin that wad as muckle as lift a "paver" to him. I wad "paver" him!'

The superintendent smiled, though as a general rule he deprecated an appeal to arms. Cleg had also a little sound advice to offer his superior.

'Ye dinna lick aneuch in your schule, Maister!' continued Cleg, for he was unselfishly desirous that everyone should succeed in the sphere of life to which Providence had called him. He did not, it is true, see any great reason for a man's having taken to keeping Sunday School. Summer treats in the country might surely have been given without them—likewise tea *soirées*. But since these things had been mixed up together, the instruction part, however unnecessary, should certainly be carried out in a workmanlike fashion.

'Not lick enough?' queried the superintendent, aghast. He thought he could not have heard aright—the pest of Hunker Court counselling corporal punishment!

'Aye, an' div ye ken,' Cleg went on, 'div ye ken I can tell ye, wha ye could get to keep the laddies as quait as pussy.'

The superintendent looked at the rebel Head Centre of Hunker Court, bending with the weight of Chris Cullen upon his shoulders.

It did not strike him that Cleg might also be able to support his own crippled steps upon his willing heathen shoulders.

'What would you advise?' he asked at last, with a certain pathetic humility.

'There's a maister at oor day schule that's awsome handy wi' the taws, an' a' the laddies are feared o' him. He comes to your kirk—I hae seen him gang in the door. Ye might get him for a teacher in yer Sabbath schule! Then the boys wad hae to be quait. His name's MacRobb.'

'Why would the boys have to be quiet then?' said Samson Langpenny, who did not yet understand what his ragged mentor was driving at.

'Dinna ye see, sir,' said Cleg eagerly, 'the boys daurna play their capers on Sabbaths at Hunker Court, an' gang to his schule on Mondays. Na, he wad fair skin them alive. It wad mak' an awfu' differ to you, sir.'

'But I do not know Mr. MacRobb,' said Samson; 'how can I get him to give up his Sabbath afternoons to teach in such a noisy place? He will say that he gets enough of teaching through the week.'

'Gae way!' said Cleg in his vernacular, forgetting for the moment to whom he spoke, 'gae way, man! Get bonny Miss Tennant, the lass in the yella frock, to speer him. He'll come fast aneuch then. He does naething else in the kirk but glower at her a' the time the minister's preaching.'

Thus Cleg jested with love, and used its victims at his pleasure.

ADVENTURE XVII.

THE KNUCKLE DUSTERS.

Soon after this Cleg Kelly became a member of a young lady's class, in a manner which has been elsewhere related.¹

That young lady was Miss Cecilia Tennant, otherwise known as Celie—a young lady much admired by all who knew her (and by some who did not, but wanted to); and especially admired by Mr. Donald Iverach, junior partner in the firm on whose premises the class was held. I have also related the tragical events which preceded the formation of the boys' class, organised under the guidance

¹ *The Stickit Minister*, p. 192.

and tutelage of Cleg Kelly. But it soon became evident that something more than a night class was necessary, if any impression were to be made on the wild Arabs of the Sooth Back.

'Ye see the way o' it is this, Miss Celie,' Cleg explained. 'Ye canna keep a boy frae ill-doing by juist telling him about Jacob for an hour in the week. There's a' day in the shop, wi' the gaffer swearin' blue murder even on, an' ill-talk an' ither things that I juist canna tell ye. Then there's every nicht, when we drap work. What can we do but stand about the streets, or start the Gang an' look about us for a bobby to chivvy, or else for something handy for "liftin'?"'

'But, Cleg,' cried Celie, much alarmed, 'surely I do not understand you to say that you *steal*?'

'Na,' said Cleg, 'we dinna steal. We only "nick" things whiles!'

Celie had heard, indeed, of the 'mobs,' the 'unions,' the 'gangs,' the 'crowds.' But she thought them simply amiable and rather silly secret societies, such as her own brothers used to make a great deal of unnecessary secrecy about—calling themselves 'Bloody Bill of the Ranch,' 'Navajo Tommy,' and other stupid names. She had remarked the same mania in Cleg sometimes, and had some reason to believe that all boys are alike, whatever may be their station in life.

But Cleg soon put his friend out of the danger of any such mistake.

'Mind, say "*As sure as daith*," an' ye'll cut your throat gin ye tell,' said Cleg, very earnestly, 'an' I'll tell ye, aye, an' make ye a member!'

Cleg was about to reveal state secrets, and he did not want to run any risks. Celie promised faithfully the utmost discretion.

'Weel, Miss Celie, I can see that ye are no gaun to do muckle guid amang us boys, if I dinna tell ye. An' I want ye no to believe ony lees, like what are telled to the ministers an' folk like them. There's mair ill in the Sooth Back than can be pitten richt wi' a track. I canna bide them tracks——'

The distribution of tracts was an old grievance of Cleg's. But Celie earnestly and instantly put him on the plain way again, for if he once began upon 'tracks,' there was no telling if ever she would get any nearer to her promised lesson on the good and evil of the boys' unions.

Celie found herself as eager as ever was her first mother Eve, to eat of the tree of the forbidden knowledge.

'Gie us your han', Miss Celie, I'll no hurt ye,' said Cleg.

Celie drew off her dainty glove, and instantly extended a hand that was white and small beyond all the boy's imagining. Cleg took it reverently in his dirty, work-broadened paw. He touched the slender fingers as if they were made of thistle-down and might blow away accidentally. So he held his breath. Then he took out his knife, one with a point like a needle, which had been used in a shoe factory.

Perhaps Celie winced a little as he opened the blade, but, if it were so, it was very little indeed. Yet it was enough to be perceptible to her very sincere admirer.

Cleg let her hand drop, and without a pause thrust the sharp point into the ball of his own thumb, squeezing therefrom a single drop of blood.

'It's no juist exactly richt, no to hae your ain blood, ye ken!' he explained gravely; 'but as ye dinna tell so mony lees as the boys, maybe mine will do as weel this time to take the oath with.'

With a clean new pen from Celie's desk, Cleg made on her palm the sign of a cross, and for her life the initiated dared not so much as let her hand quiver or her eyelid droop.

She knew that the occasion was an entirely critical one. But in a moment it was over, and Celie Tennant was admitted a *bonâ fide* acting member of the Sooth Back Gang, with full right in its secrets and to the disposal of one full and undivided share of its profits. No questions to be asked as to how these profits were come by. Indeed, from that moment there is little doubt that Celie Tennant might have been indicted for reset, conspiracy, and crimes infinitely various.

That night at Miss Tennant's class there was a full attendance, and the opening was delayed owing to necessity arising for the expulsion of a boy, apparently in no way offending against discipline.

Celie looked the question she dared not speak.

'He's no yin o' us!' explained Cleg in a whisper. 'He belongs to the Potter-raw gang—a low lot.'

Celie felt morally raised by the consciousness of belonging to a gang of the most high-toned 'nickums' in the whole city.

Then Cleg, after the briefest opening exercises had been endured, explained that there remained for that evening only the ceremony of reception of a new member who had already been sworn in. In this Celie had to concur with as good a grace as possible. She was then and there appointed, with acclamation,

a full member of the honourable (or dishonourable, according to the point of view) society of the Knuckle Dusters of the Sooth Back. It was generally felt after this, that Jacob (the Patriarch of that name) could very well afford to wait over for a little.

But, after the ceremony, when Celie looked again at her class, she could hardly believe her eyes. Were these the lads who night after night had stood before her with faces sleeked and smugged with arrant hypocrisy, or had looked up at her after some bout of intolerable mischief, as demure as kittens after spilling a saucer of milk?

A certain seriousness and comradeship pervaded the meeting. But Cleg was not yet at the end of his surprises.

'I perpose,' he said, 'that we hae a Club a' for oorsels.'

The meeting with unanimous palm and hoof signified its approval of this grand proposal, obviously one which had been discussed before.

'We will hae it in here, and we'll pay to be members—an' that will do for the coals, and we'll hae smokin'——'

Celie sat aghast. Events were precipitating themselves with a vengeance. Indeed, surprise sat so manifest on her countenance that Cleg thought it wise to point out its genuine character to his brother members. It would never do for them to believe that the great idea of the club had not originated with themselves.

'She kens nocht aboot it, but I ken fine she's gaun to stan' in wi' us!' he explained, putting her, as it were, on her honour and under the solemn seal of the bloody cross of the Knuckle Dusters.

In this Celie, bound by her oath, had indeed no choice.

She must of a surety stand by them. But a serious difficulty occurred to her.

'Lads,' she said, 'we have only the right to this place for one night in the week. How can we occupy it every night?'

All the boys laughed loud. The question was mightily amusing. Indeed, Celie was often most amusing to them when she had no intention of being so.

'Of coorse, we ken, ye hae only to ask *him*!' they said, with one solid voice of general concurrence.

Celie felt herself beginning to burn low down on her neck, and it made her angry to think that in a minute more she would blush like a great baby just out of the senior class of the Ladies' College. The boys watched her maliciously till she looked really distressed, and then Cleg struck gallantly into the breach.

'Chaps,' he cried, 'I think we should ask for oorsels. We

are gaun to elec' a commy-tee and run the show. Dinna let us begin by troublin' Miss Tennant. We'll gang an' ask oorsels, Gin ye are feared, I'm no!'

Crash! came a stone through the window. All leapt to their feet in a moment.

'It's that dirty scoundrel frae the Potter-raw. Oot after him!' cried Cleg.

Whereupon the newly constituted Knuckle Dusters' Club tumultuously detached itself for police duty. There was a scurry along the highway, a fight at a street corner. Two boys got a black eye apiece. A policeman was assaulted in the half-humorous way peculiar to the district. A letter-deliverer sat down suddenly on the pavement, to the delay of Her Majesty's mails, and after five well-spent and happy minutes, the Club re-entered, wiping its brow, and Cleg cried:

'Three cheers for the Knuckle Dusters' Club! Miss Celie to be the president for ever an' ever. We'll meet the morn's night to elec' the commy-tee. *And there's twenty meenits left for Jacob!*'

And so the Knuckle Duster Club sat patiently down to endure its Scripture lesson.

ADVENTURE XVIII.

BIG SMITH SUBDUES THE KNUCKLE DUSTERS.

THE reader of this random chronicle has not forgotten the Troglodytes—the Cave Dwellers, the Railing Roosters—alien to the race of men, with manners and customs darkly their own.

These are they with whom Cleg had to do, when he amused himself all that summer day opposite the house of the sergeant. Of the Troglodytes the chief were Tam Luke, who for a paltry consideration gave his time during the day to furthering the affairs of Tamson the baker; Cleaver's boy, who similarly conducted the butcher's business next door; and the grocer's boy, who answered to the name of 'Marg'—that is, if he who used it was very much bigger and stronger than himself. In other circumstances 'Marg' chased and hammered according to his ability the boy who called the name after him—for it was contracted from 'margarine,' and involved a distinct slur upon his line of business.

But each man of the Troglodytes was a Knuckle Duster. In the Club they were banded together for offence and defence. In

the days before Cleg took in hand to reorganise the club, they had a good many things in common besides the fear of the constable.

Now, each boy was most respectable during his hours of business. There was no 'sneaking' the goods of their own masters. The till was safe, and they did not carry away the stock-in-trade to sell it. But that was pretty much all the way their honour went. Their kind of honesty, it is to be feared, was chiefly of the 'best policy' sort. Fun was fun, and 'sneaking' was the breath of life; but it was one thing to 'fake an apple,' and altogether another to be 'nicked' for stealing from one's master. The latter meant the loss of situation without a character. Now a character is a valuable asset. It is negotiable, and must be taken care of. To steal does not hurt one's character—only to be found out. To break a plate-glass window with a stone does not harm a character as much as it damages the window; but to be an hour late three mornings running is fatal. So Cleaver's boy had a character; 'Marg' had a character, and even Tam Luke had a character. They were all beauties. Our own Cleg had half a dozen different characters—most of them, however, rather indifferent.

But there is no mistake that, under the influence of Celie Tennant and the new Knuckle Dusters' Club, they were all in the way of improvement. The good character of their hours of work already began to lap over into their play-time. But thus it was not always.

Just before its re-inauguration the Sooth Back 'mob' had been rather down on its luck. Cleg was among them only intermittently. They had had a fight with Bob Sowerby's gang, which frequented the Pleasance lands, and had been ignominiously defeated.

Worse than all, they had come across 'Big' Smith, the athletic missionary of the Pleasance. He was so called to distinguish him from 'Little' Smith, a distinguished predecessor of the same name, who was popularly understood to have read every book that was. Big Smith was not distinguished in the same way. All the same, he was both distinguished and popular.

On this occasion he was addressing his weekly meeting underneath one of the great houses. The Knuckle Dusters thought it good sport to ascend to the window of the common stair, and prepare missiles both fluid and solid. This was because they belonged to the Sooth Back, and did not know Big Smith.

Big Smith's mode of exhortation was the prophetic denunciatory. He was no Jeremiah—a Boanerges of the slums rather. He dealt in warm accusations and vigorous personal applications. He was very decidedly no minor prophet, for he had a black beard like an Astrakhan rug, and a voice that could outroar a Gilmerton carter. Also he was six feet high, and when he crossed his arms it was like a long-range marker trying to fold his arms round a target.

'Sinners in Number Seventy-Three!' cried Big Smith, and his voice penetrated into every den and corner of that vast rabbit warren, 'you will not come out to hear me, but I'll make ye hear me yet, if I sraich till the Day of Judgment. Sinners in Number Seventy-Three, ye are a desperate bad lot. I hae kenned ye this ten year—but——'

Clash!—came a pail of dirty water out of the stair window where the Knuckle Dusters, yet completely unregenerate, were concealed.

Big Smith was taking breath for his next overwhelming sentence, but he never got it delivered. For as soon as he realised that the insult was meant for him, Big Smith pushed his hat firmly down on the back of his head, and started up the stair. He had his oak staff in his hand, a stick of fibre and responsibility, as indeed it had need to be.

The first he got his hands upon was Tam Luke.

Tam was standing at the back of a door, squeezing himself against the wall as flat as a skate.

'Come oot!' said Big Smith, in commanding tones.

'It wasna me!' said Tam Luke, who very earnestly wished himself elsewhere.

'Come oot!' said Big Smith, missionary.

Tam Luke came—not wholly by his own will, but because the hand of Big Smith seemed to gather up most of his garments at once. And he grasped them hard too. Tam Luke's toes barely touched the ground.

'It wasna me!' repeated Tam Luke.

'What's a' this, then?' queried Big Smith, shaking him comprehensively, as the coal-man of the locality empties a hundred-weight sack into the bunker. Half a dozen vegetables, more or less gamey in flavour, dropped out of his pockets, and trotted irregularly down the stair.

Then Tam Luke, for the first time in his life, believed in the

power of the church militant. The Knuckle Dusters on the landing above listened with curious qualms, hearing Tam singing out his petitions in a kind of inappeasable rapture. Then, suddenly, they bethought them that it was time they got out of their present invidious position, and they made a rush downstairs.

But Big Smith stood on the steps, still holding Tam Luke, and with a foot like a Sutton's furniture van, he tripped each one impartially as he passed, till quite a little haycock of Knuckle Dusters was formed at an angle of the stair.

Then Big Smith, in a singularly able-bodied way, argued with the heap in general for the good of their souls; and the noise of the oak stick brought out all the neighbours to look on with approbation. They had no sympathy with the Knuckle Dusters whatever. And though they continually troubled the peace of mind of Big Smith with their goings on, yet they were loyal to him in their own way, and rejoiced exceedingly when they saw him 'dressing the droddums' of the youths of the Sooth Back Gang.

'Lay on till them, Maister Smith!—bringin' disgrace on oor stair,' cried a hodman's wife from the top landing, looking over with the brush in her hand. And Maister Smith certainly obeyed her. Each Knuckle Duster crawled hurriedly away as soon as he could disentangle himself. And as each passed the lower landings the wives harassed his retreat with brushes and pokers for bringing shame on the unstained good name of Number Seventy-Three in the Pleasance.

'It'll learn them no to meddle wi' oor missionary,' they said, as they retired to drink tea syrup, which had been stewing on the hearth since morning.

For they felt proud of Big Smith, and told their husbands, actual and attached, of the great doings upon their return at night. It became a standing taunt as far as the Arch of Abbeyhill for a month, 'I'll send Big Smith till ye!' And there was not a Knuckle Duster that did not hang his head at the remembrance. The Pleasance was naturally very proud of its missionary, and offered long odds on him as against any missionary in the town. 'He could lick them a' wi' his hand tied ahint his back,' said the Pleasance in its wholly reasonable pride.

Now this was the cause of the depression which for a long time had rested upon the Knuckle Dusters and tarnished the glory of their name. So low had they sunk that it was more than a month since any of them had been up for assaulting the police.

So that, as you may see, things were indeed coming to a pretty pass. From all this the new Club was to save them.

First of all, it re-established them in their own self-esteem, which is a great point. Then it gained them the respect of others as well, for Miss Tennant was a much honoured person in the Sooth Back. Lastly, the Club fire burned a half a ton of coals in the fortnight, and the fact was fame in itself.

So the Knuckle Dusters squared themselves up, and for the first time since the affair of Big Smith they looked a bobby in the face. More than that, they actually began to show some of their old spirit again.

Specially did they delight to tell the story of the Leith chief of police and the apples. It was, indeed, enough to gild any 'mob' with a permanent halo of glory.

This is the tale at its briefest. But it took four nights to tell in the Club, working three hours a night.

The chief, in the plainest of plain clothes, was hastening down the shore to catch the Aberdour boat, for he was a family man, and also a most douce and home-loving citizen. He had taken a cottage near the shore at Aberdour, where he could have his bairns under his eye upon the beach, and at the same time be able to note how badly the Fife police did their duty in the matter of the Sunday excursionists.

But for all that he ought to have had that packet of apples better tied up, for he had bought a whole shilling's worth on his way down. The chief was rather partial to a good apple himself; and, in any case, it is always advisable to be on the safe side of one's wife, even if you are a chief of police.

Now the chief reckoned without the Knuckle Dusters. These valiant youths were on the war-path, and as he was passing a point where the houses are few, along by the dock gates, Tam Luke came alongside and pulled the string of his parcel with a sharp and knowing twitch. Instantly it came undone, and the apples rolled every way upon the street. Thereupon every Knuckle Duster seized as many as he could reach, and the Club scattered like hunted hares down alleys and over fences.

For a moment the chief stood thunderstruck. Then he gave chase, selecting Cleaver's boy for his prey. But he found that he was not quite so supple as when he was a young constable fresh from the country. And besides, he heard the warning whistle blow from the 'Lord Aberdour.' He pictured his bairns on the

quay and his wife looking out for him. After all, was it worth it? So he darted into a shop and bought chocolate instead, and took his anger out by saying, 'I'll wager I'll make it warm for these young vagabonds.' He said it as many as forty times on the way over. He never minded the scenery one single bit. Among the Knuckle Dusters there was great jubilation. That night they told the whole to Celie Tennant, who was horrified; but she could only advise them to 'restore fourfold,' an unknown idea to the Club.

It was, however, a proposition ably advocated by Cleg Kelly, who, owing to absence, not honesty, had taken no part in the larceny. And, strictly as a humorous conception, the idea of fourfold restitution caught on wonderfully.

This is why a very dirty paper containing two shillings came to the chief of the Leith police, with the inscription thereon: 'FOR TO BUY MAIR AIPPLES.'

Celie wanted them to send four shillings, but the Club unanimously declined, because the grocer's boy said that the chief's apples were only second quality.

And the Club had every confidence in the grocer's boy being well-informed on the point.

ADVENTURE XIX.

THE PILGRIMS OF THE PENNY GAFF.

THE junior partner was, as he expressed it, 'down on his luck.' He was heartily sorry for himself, and indeed the fault was not all his own. It was now some considerable time since he began regularly to see home the lady member of the Knuckle Dusters' Club, and perhaps he had begun to some extent to presume upon his standing. He had, in fact, taken it upon him to warn her as to the difficulties of her position.

'It is not right for a young lady to be about in this district at night—no girl ought to do it, whatever be her motive.'

He was sometimes a very short-sighted junior partner.

Celie Tennant fired up.

'And pray, Mr. Iverach, who made you my guardian? I am quite of age to judge where it is right for me to go, and what it is proper for me to do!'

The junior partner assumed a lofty attitude.

'I consider,' he began, 'that it is highly improper.'

But this was as far as he got. The pose judicial was not one to which Miss Cecilia Tennant was accustomed, even from her own father. She dropped her companion a very pretty courtesy.

'I consider that our roads separate here,' she said; 'and I wish you a very good evening, Mr. Iverach!'

And she gave the junior partner a look at once so indignant and so admirably provocative, that he turned away righteously incensed, but at the same time miscalling himself for more kinds of idiot than his father had ever called him, even on his most absent-minded days in the office.

Nevertheless he endeavoured, by a dignified manner as he walked away, to express his wounded feelings, his unquenchable sense of injustice, the rectitude of his aims and intentions, and the completeness with which he washed his hands of all consequences. It is not easy to express all this by simply taking off one's hat, especially when you have a well-grounded belief that you are being laughed at privately by one whom you—well, respect. And saying 'silly girl' over and over does not help the matter either. For the junior partner tried, and it did not improve the situation so much as the value of a last evening's paper.

On the other hand, there was a sense of exhilaration about Celie Tennant's heart and a certain lightness in her head, when she had thus vindicated her independence. She stopped and looked into the window of a shop in which nothing was displayed but a large model of a coal-waggon, loaded with something 'Jewels,' and bearing the sympathetic announcement that Waldie's Best Household Coal was down this week one penny a bag.

It is a curious thing, when you come to think of it, that the prettiest girls often stop opposite dark shop fronts where there is apparently nothing to interest them, and pass by others all aglow with the blanched whiteness of female frilleries. There is some unexplained optical problem here. The matter has been mentioned to Miss Tennant, but she says that she does not know the reason. She adds that it is all nonsense. Perhaps, after Professor Tait has found out all about the flight of the golf-ball, he will give some attention to this question. He can obtain statistics and facts on any well-frequented street by keeping to the shady side.

So Celie stood a moment—only a moment, and was then quite ready to turn away, assured in mind and at peace with all men—with the doubtful exception of Mr. Donald Iverach.

Her bonnet was indeed 'straight on.' But she gave her foot a little stamp when she thought of the junior partner.

‘The idea!’ she said.

But she did not condescend to expound the concept which troubled her, so that an idea it has ever since remained, and indeed must be left as such.

Then Celie became conscious that some one was gazing at her—not a woman, of course. She turned. It was only Cleg Kelly. But she was glad to see even him, for, after all, one does need some support even in well-doing. It is so difficult to be independent all by one’s self.

‘Where are you going, Cleg?’ she said.

‘To the penny shows aff o’ the Easter Road,’ replied Cleg.

‘Will you take me, Cleg?’ said Celie, with a sudden clearing of her face, her eyes beginning to blaze with excitement.

A great thought took possession of her. This appeared to be a providential chance to prove all that she had been advancing to Mr. Donald Iverach, who, indeed, had nothing whatever to do with the matter.

‘Take you, Miss Celie?’ stammered Cleg aghast. ‘Ye wadna gang to the shows?’

And he laughed a little laugh of wonderment at the jest of his goddess, for of course it could only be a joke.

‘I *will* come with you, Cleg, if you will take me!’ said Celie.

‘But ye ken, Miss Celie, it’s no for the like o’ you. It’s a’ weel aneuch for boys and common fowk, but no for you!’

Thus Cleg urged prudence, even against the wild hope which took possession of him.

‘Come on, Cleg!’ said Celie Tennant, rushing into rebellion at the thought of having her independence called in question, even by one of the Knuckle Dusters.

‘It’s all *his* fault!’ she said to herself.

Which it very clearly was—Cleg’s, of course, for he ought not to have followed her home.

Now along the Easter Road, then only a somewhat muddy country track, there was a small quarry which is now filled up, and a vacant acre or two of land where the show-folk took up their stances, and waged mimic but not bloodless wars in the mornings for the best positions.

Great sheets of canvas were stretched above, flaring cressets were being lighted below, for some of the largest shows were dark inside, being those where the mysteries of ‘Pepper’s Ghost’ were shortly to be unveiled.

Celie Tennant was greatly excited by the prospect of eating of the tree of knowledge.

'Let us go in here,' she said, pointing to the wondrous 'Ghost Illusion' bearing the name and style of Biddle. She drew out her purse to pay, but Cleg stopped her with his hand. He had grown quite dignified.

'Na,' he said, 'ye canna do that. It's my treat the nicht, when ye are walkin' oot wi' me.'

Then it dawned upon Celie that she was assisting at a well-understood function—no less than the solemn treating of a lady fair upon the evening of a pay-day. The thought nearly overcame her, but she only said, 'Thank you, Cleg,' and was discreetly silent.

For the time being she was Cleg Kelly's 'young woman.'

They went in. A fat woman, with large silver rings in her ears of the size of crown pieces, took Cleg's money and looked with great sharpness at them both. Cleg paid for the best places in the house. They cost him sixpence, and were carpeted—the seats, not the floor. To such heights of extravagance does woman lead man! The play was already proceeding as they sat down. Presently, after some very moral observations from an old gentleman in trouble with a dying child (he said 'choild'), the curtain dropped and the roof of canvas was drawn aside, in order to let in the struggling day-light and save the flaring naphtha cressets.

Instantly Celie and Cleg became the sole centre of attraction—a doubledt courtier in tights, with an unruly sword which scraped the curtain, having no chance whatever by comparison with their grandeur. Cleg folded his arms with a proud disdain and sat up with a back as straight as an arrow.

'Glory be—if 't isn't Cleg Kelly wid the Quane of Shaeba,' said a compatriot in the pit. (The house was divided into pit and carpet.) And this was the general opinion. It was the proudest moment of Cleg's existence—to date, as he himself said.

Celie sat all the while demure as a kitten and smoothed her gloves. Several Knuckle Dusters passed Cleg the private wink of the society, but none dared intrude on that awful dignity of responsibility. Besides, none of them were 'on the carpet,' and Biddle of the Silver Rings possessed a quick eye and a long arm.

The curtain went up. This time it was a haunted room. A haunted clock ticked irregularly in the corner, and the villain sat alone in his quite remarkable villainy, on a solitary chair in the middle of the room. It was very dark, owing to the murky cast of crime all round. Suddenly the gentleman on the chair shouted

out the details of his 'croime' at the pitch of his voice, as if he had been the town crier. He told how much he regretted having left his victim weltering in his gore, whereupon the aforesaid victim abruptly appeared, 'weltering,' it is true, but rather in a white sheet with the lower part of which his legs appeared to be having a difficulty.

The villain hastened to rise to the occasion. Once more he drew his sword, with which he had been making gallant play all the time. Again he informed the next street of his 'croime.' Then he pulled a pistol out of his belt and solemnly warned the spectre what would happen if he did not clear out and take his winding-sheet with him.

But the spectre appeared to be wholly unimpressed, for he only gibbered more incoherently and fluttered the bed-quilt (as Cleg called it) more wildly. The villain continued to exhort.

'He's an awfu' blatherumskite!' said Cleg, contemptuously. He knew something of real villains. He had a father.

Again the spectre was warned:—

'Your blood be upon your own head!' shouted the villain, and fired the pistol.

The ghost remarked, *Br-r-r-r-r! whoop!*—went up to the ceiling, came down again wrong side up, and then set about gibbering in a manner more freezing than ever. Whereupon the villain seized his crime-rusted sword in both hands and puddled about in the spectre's anatomy, as if it had been a pot, and he was afraid it would boil over. But soon he satisfied himself that this was not the game to play with a spirit so indifferent. And with a wild shriek of despair he cast the sword from him on the floor.

'Ha, baffled! foiled!' he remarked, clasping his hand suddenly to his brow: 'COL-LD FIRE IS USELESS!'

This was summing up the situation with a vengeance, and tickled Celie so much that she laughed joyously—as the audience clapped and cheered with appreciation, and Cleg rose to come out.

'What comes after that?' said Celie, who was quite willing to stay to the end.

'After that the devil got him. We needna wait for that!' said Cleg, simply. He had an exceedingly healthy and orthodox belief in the ultimate fate of ill-doers. But he did not choose that his goddess should witness the details.

(To be continued.)

PATENTS AND MONOPOLIES.

THE term 'patent' by no means always meant in old times what it does now. It was at the best but a loose form of expression—merely a shortening of 'letters-patent.' These were an authority from the Sovereign, confirmed by the Lord Chancellor under the Great Seal, to do certain things which did not necessarily require the consent of Parliament. Titles of nobility, for instance, were granted under letters-patent, the issuing of which formed a jealously-guarded portion of the Royal prerogative. They were also issued, amongst many other purposes, to give individuals the sole right of importing, exporting, making or selling various articles. They were also granted to inventors, much as they now are under an Act of Parliament, for the exclusive right to make and sell the article they had invented or improved, for a term of years. The former of these two kinds went under the name of 'monopoly-patents,' or, more briefly, 'monopolies.' Sometimes they were granted only for one or more of the four kingdoms; in most cases the terms were a matter of private arrangement with the Sovereign. The Tudors and Stuarts did not hesitate to derive large sums from the sale of monopolies and patent rights of all kinds. These rights gradually became most oppressive, many of the commonest articles of consumption being the monopoly of some greedy courtier who shared his ill-gotten gains with the Head of the State. The system began to be most abused under Elizabeth, who in 1571 first met with murmurs from Parliament, provoked by this growing evil. She put off the subject with soft words, promised to be more careful, and for a time she was. Between 1586 and 1597, however, many grants of monopoly-patents had been made to courtiers and others of a kind not only injurious to the public, but illegal. Some of the patentees were unpopular, and their agents in carrying out the trading-rights were often most arbitrary and inconsiderate in their proceedings.

In 1597 the matter was again brought before the Queen, but, the granting of these monopolies being part of the prerogative, Elizabeth would only promise that 'they should all be examined, to abide the trial and true touchstone of the law.' Nevertheless, in 1600 patents were found to have been granted in greater

numbers than ever, and much feeling was excited over, in particular, a patent given to Henry Neville for the export of iron ordnance. These guns were principally made in the Weald of Sussex, and, being in much demand abroad, to export them was considered to be arming our enemies against ourselves. Neville paid the Queen 3,000*l.* a year for his rights. The Commons would undoubtedly have passed a Bill against monopolies had she not stated, with a very bad grace, that she had been unaware of their bad effects. Before another Parliament met Elizabeth had passed away, leaving the ill-defined prerogatives of the Crown on this subject to be settled between her incompetent successor and the increasingly-powerful House of Commons.

It must not, however, be supposed that all the patents of monopoly were of injurious tendency. Those which gave permission to bring in and enjoy the fruits of a new industry were, of course, directly beneficial. There was more mechanical and artistic talent abroad than in England in those days, and it was good policy to encourage anything which tended to raise native skill to the Continental level. On many occasions foreigners had been invited over, at the King's sole cost, to teach us how to make certain things, or to carry on improved processes of mining, ship-building, stained-glass making, and so on.

In 1603 James's first Parliament decreed that persons who felt themselves injured by the granting of patents or monopolies to others should send in written statements of their cases, and that a committee should report upon such cases and advise what had best be done to meet them. It was found upon inquiry that most of the monopolist trading companies (the largest one the world has ever seen, the East India Company, was founded in 1600) were not doing well, but that many private persons had made large fortunes by their grants. The House then decided that these privileges should be divided into lawful and unlawful ones. On the list being submitted to the King by Sir Francis Bacon, he cancelled some patents, left the legality of others to be settled in the courts of law, and clung tenaciously to his royal prerogative in others.

One of the patents on the list had been granted to the Lord Admiral to sell wines—a somewhat undignified occupation for such an officer, but a curious proof how far corruption had spread in the highest ranks of the public service.

At this period, however, James I. did not quite feel his way in

this country. A total stranger to it, he was careful at first to please his new subjects till he found what they would put up with and what they were rather touchy about. Cautiously he began to grant monopolies in all directions, moved thereto by his own avarice and that of the many needy Scotchmen who followed him into the Land of Promise. The patentees, however, had to pay very smartly for their privileges. James's first exploit was a patent given to Lord Sheffield, Sir Thomas Challenor, and John Bourchier, Esq., in 1606, of 'divers absolute, full, free licences touching the sole and only making of allomes (alum) and liquors thereof' in England, Scotland, and Ireland for thirty-one years, they paying him 700*l.* a year. Having made this tolerably satisfactory bargain (the sum named would be equal to nearer 2,000*l.* now), the King discovered that alum was a metal, and that the prerogative gave him a right to all metals. The patentees, who in the meantime had assigned half their interest to some London merchants, with power to 'dig, open, and work all manner of mines and ewers of allomes' wherever they might be found, had to surrender their rights for 10,000*l.* a year. This was to be raised to 12,000*l.* in three years, but was intended to re-imburse them for the buildings and plant they had erected in various places. The next step of the crafty Scot was to grant a long lease to the adventurers of the buildings and plant in question and half the profits they might make for a certain payment in ready money and the sum of 5,000*l.* for the first year, rising to, and remaining at, 11,000*l.* for a fixed period. This half-share was said to bring the King 18,000*l.* a year (perhaps less the above sum); he stopped the importation of foreign alum, and bound the 'adventurers' not to sell under 26*l.* per ton. Of course the unfortunate lieges who had to use alum were the sufferers by this neat little swindle.

In 1612 King James thought it was time to do a little more business on his own account. One Simon Sturtevant was granted a patent for making with 'sea cole, pit cole or earth cole,' instead of with wood fuel and charcoal, 'all kinds of metal workes and materials, as iron, steele, lead, tins, brass, coppers, brasses, and such like, all kinds of metalique concoctions as sand, mettles, ash mettles, and all kinds of burnt earths as tiles, paving-stones, bricks, and such like.' The destruction of forest-timber for fuel in many parts of the country was becoming extremely serious. As timber was quite as necessary for ship-building as for manu-

facturing, anything which promised to preserve the stock of it was earnestly looked for. Sturtevant proposed to make coals into coke, by which the smoke, then considered most unwholesome, if not dangerous to life, was done away with and the carriage diminished. The rise of the Newcastle coal-trade by sea dates from soon after this time, the term sea-coal having especial reference to it. The patent was for thirty-one years; the profits were divided into thirty-three parts, of which Sturtevant was to have fifteen, the King ten, Henry Prince of Wales five, the Duke of York (afterwards Charles I.) two, and Viscount Rochester one. We do not know what the royal traders made out of their bargain, but think it very unlikely that so excellent a man of business as His Majesty lost anything by it.

The use of coal for the smaller branches of metal-working, such as casting small articles of brass, making horse-shoes, &c., had been common for some time where coal existed, but iron was either not known to exist in the coal country, or till Sturtevant's time no one thought it could be smelted with coal. The enormous destruction of trees in Surrey, Kent, and Sussex, where ironstone abounds, was an additional cause for dissatisfaction at the exportation of cannon cast with the charcoal they produced.

Small money having become very scarce, James granted in 1613 letters patent under the Great Seal to Lord Harrington to coin copper farthings. Lead tokens had been used in places, and were rather liked. It was not easy at first to get the copper farthings accepted, but they were found useful before long. Lord Harrington, who was bound to pay to the King all the profit above 25,000*l.*, made a good thing for himself out of it.

A good many comparatively harmless patents were granted for the right of printing and selling certain books, generally for twenty-one years. In some cases these smaller sort of patents seem to have been given to deserving persons in lieu of pensions. Some cannot, we think, have brought much profit to their holders, as, for instance, one granted in 1618 to Samuel Atkinson and John Morgan 'to find out things hidden in monasteries,' and one in 1616 to Innocent Lamyer to take away shoals and ballast from the Thames. The stones and pebbles were used for ships' ballast, but the rest of the material must have been somewhat embarrassing to its finder. One John Gilbert invented a 'water-plough,' a kind of dredger, and patented it. He agreed to give to the

King one-half of the value of all treasure-trove, plate, jewels, &c., he should find.

Some of the patents were impudent frauds on the public. Two persons obtained one in 1620 for the exclusive right of importing lobsters, pretending to have discovered a great supply of them. Instead, they simply bought them out at sea from Dutch fishermen, and sold for threepence that which hitherto had cost but a penny. The good old days of penny lobsters are, we grieve to think, gone never to return.

About this time (1620) the King, well aware of the general dislike to patents of monopoly, referred each proposed grant to certain law officers and members of the Privy Council, to weigh it and decide whether or not it should be granted. The 'referees,' however, were just as corrupt as every one who had to do with patents, and by their approval often induced people to join in utterly worthless projects.

Much of the opposition to patents, as we said before, was aroused by the high-handed way in which they were worked. Edward and Christopher Villiers, brothers of the royal favourite, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, were partners with the Duke, Sir George Mompesson, and others, in a patent giving them the entire monopoly of the trade in gold and silver thread, then much used in dress. They were found to have issued warrants in the Attorney-General's name for seizing and imprisoning some who attempted to resist the exercise of the monopoly. Sir G. Mompesson had even committed persons to gaol without examination, whilst another partner, named Fowle, had locked up people in his own house for several weeks. They had broken open houses, seized goods, compelled traders to declare on oath what they had sold, and had mixed lead with the gold and silver used for the thread or lace. Much of this, however, was within the strict letter of the patent, and they were sheltered by the highest authorities, who declared that too great powers had been granted, which were intended to be but rarely used. Nevertheless, Mompesson and another were degraded from knighthood, and heavily fined. Buckingham and his brothers escaped punishment, the House having a wholesome awe of the powerful favourite.

A very excellent industry was set afoot at Mortlake in 1622, under a patent granted to Sir Francis Crane. It was for the manufacture of tapestry, both of the ordinary kind and made with

gold thread; for which, no doubt, the patentees last named made poor Sir Francis pay very smartly. Except for a narrow escape of coming to grief through the slow payments of its royal and noble patrons, the factory seems to have been very successful, and was carried on for a good many years. Both James I. and Charles I. had some splendid suites of tapestry made at Mortlake, and specimens of its beautiful productions still exist.

Parliament, or at any rate the House of Commons, was all along opposed both to monopolies and to patents for inventions, but the King found them much too profitable to give up, and in spite of scandal after scandal he continued to grant them to the end of his reign. So little cared he for the opinion of Parliament that whilst it was considering a Bill for abolishing the system entirely, he granted two persons the privilege of selling letters of naturalisation to foreigners.

The House now took to demanding to see the letters-patent under which the various grantees acted. Some were found to be quite out of order, but thirty members, presenting a petition to the King against monopolies, received a fine snubbing for their pains. 'Now I speak to all of you,' said James; 'be not too ready to hunt out grievances where there is no cause. I find most of them to be slight ones, which indeed makes my heart jovial. I confess I might have passed some upon false suggestion and wrong information, but you are not to recall them before they have been examined by the judges. And here I have heard it complained of by those of our counsel learned in the law that you will from time to time, delaying the patentees, still call for patents without just ground and so put the subjects to much charge, and put a scorn upon my patents. I therefore advise you to be careful that you have a good ground before you call for patents, and that you do not defraud the patentees. Therefore this I say to you, hear the patentees' counsel patiently, say not presently it is against the law, for patents are not to be judged unlawful by you. I must first believe myself and my counsel and then you are to give your opinion of the conveniences that ensue thereupon.' This foolish speech, so like those which Charles also used to treat his Parliament to, doubtless bore fruit later on.

At last, in 1624, an Act was passed declaring monopolies to be contrary to law and subject to be tried and determined by it. Four existing grants, however, were saved from the operation of this Act, and four more shortly to be granted. It is needless to

say that these eight were, or were expected to be, the most lucrative to the King of the whole lot. 'Letters-patent and grants of privilege' might be granted for twenty-one years to original inventors, provided they were not injurious to the commonwealth. Under this Act, however, no inventor could claim a patent as a right; the King could grant it if he chose, subject to the above terms, and to such others as he thought fit, the latter of course taking the form of hard cash.

A curious invention, of 'applyenge of certen compounded stuffes and waters,' in the shape of a cement or dressing, whereby the 'mastes, deckes, tackle, sayles, hulles and bodies of shippes and other vessells may be preserved in fight at sea from burnynge or consumynge by wildfyre or gunpowder,' was patented in 1625 by William Beale, goldsmith, of London. This composition could also be applied below the water-line to prevent the attacks of barnacles and worms, 'whereby many shippes of greate value are oftentimes utterly spoyled.' The patentee was authorised to dig for his materials in all commons and waste grounds, and none were to hinder him.

One of the four patents reserved as soon to be granted proved to be for the manufacture of saltpetre—a necessary ingredient of gunpowder. The principal source of it then known was earth impregnated with manurial matter, and most extensive and vexatious powers were given to the patentees and their agents to dig up and take away the floors of stables, dove-cotes, pig-stys, and such places. The agents were to fill up the excavations with 'goode and mellow earth, fitt for the encrease of the myne of saltpeter.' Paving or boarding the floors was not allowed; the 'saltpeterman' might dig wherever he chose; justices were to refuse him help at their peril, and no maker was to sell gunpowder save to the King's powder-maker. As might be supposed, such powers excited great opposition, and the unfortunate 'saltpetermen' were sometimes very roughly handled.

In 1625 William Drummond, an ingenious Scotchman, obtained patents for certain warlike weapons of his invention, which, if they really answered to his description of them, were very much in advance of those times. One of them was 'a sort or machine of congregated musquets, by which one or two soldiers were able to oppose a hundred guns.' It was called the 'thundering chariot' or 'fiery waggon.' One seems to see the germ of the Maxim or Gatling gun—or rather, perhaps, of the mitrailleuse—

in this ancient instrument. Another invention of Drummond's recalls the naval quick-firing gun—'a new species of gun of the greater kind, by which, in the same time that they have been able to discharge one ball, they may now discharge three, four, or five, either by sea or land.' In 1632 one Thomas Grent, 'doctor in phisick,' was granted patents for some extraordinary devices, one of which was 'a fishe call, or looking-glass for fishes in the sea, very useful for fishermen to call all kinds of fishes to their netts, seans, or hookes.' Another of Dr. Grent's inventions was more professional in character. It consisted of 'a moveable hydraulike, or chamber weather cale, like a cabinet, which, being placed in any room or by a bed-side, causeth sweet sleep to those that either by hott feavers or otherways cannot take reste, and withal altereth the dry hott ayre into a more moystening and cooling temper, either with musical sounds or without.' This musical ventilator might be revived with advantage, one would think.

So many as five members of Parliament were expelled by the House in 1640, on the ground that they were 'projectors of patents' or held monopolies. Cromwell, or the Parliament which he controlled, put an end finally to the system of monopolies, or grants of the sole right of trading in certain articles, and for this, as for so much else, he deserves the thanks of posterity. The political disturbances of his time were not favourable to inventors who hoped to make money out of their inventions; but with the general revival of business and confidence after the Restoration, patents were more and more applied for.

So early as 1670 a patent was granted for the manufacture of tinned plate, the art being introduced from Saxony. Someone, however, obtained an inkling of the process before the new company got to work, and the proprietors lost everything they had spent in acquiring the right to use it.

A patent was given in 1675 to several 'truly loyal and indigent officers' to have the profits of the Royal Oak Lottery and 'all other lotteries whatsoever, invented or to be invented.' The following year what was about the first tolerably efficient fire-engine was invented, and a patent for it was given to Messrs. Wharton & Strode. The engine comprised leather hose, just like the modern ones, but the difficulty of getting enough water was usually so great that inventions in this line were of little practical value. Repeating-clocks, in which the pulling of a string struck the minute, the last quarter of the hour, and the hour, were also

invented in 1676, but the patent was not granted for several years afterwards.

Prince Rupert, having laid aside the sword, became in his latter days a distinguished inventor and held many patents. That for mezzotint engraving will be familiar to most. He also found out an alloy similar to gun-metal, and used for much the same purposes, and a curious machine worked by horses for towing vessels against wind and tide. This last, however, proved to be more ingenious than useful.

From 1666 it had been compulsory to bury the dead in woollen, to encourage the wool manufacture; and in 1678 Widow Amy Potter obtained a patent for the elegant woollen costume she devised for this melancholy purpose. About 1680 the King's apothecary in ordinary made an unpleasant invention, which Mrs. Potter would doubtless have strongly objected to. It was a mode of preserving dead bodies from decay, without cutting or opening them. He offered for 5*l.* to make any corpse endure for many years without change, and actually presented Charles II. with one, 'with which His Majesty was very much satisfied.' A few years later, one William Wilkins, who had brought over many dead bodies buried in Ireland months before, under this patent appropriately started in business at 'the sign of The Coffin, over against York Buildings in the Strand.'

The Hon. Robert Fitzgerald and others obtained a patent in 1682 for a mode of converting sea-water into fresh, a matter of extreme importance for the navy, where the loss of life and health through bad provisions and bad water was very great. Several captains spoke highly of the invention, but it never seems to have come into general use. Apparently the salt was deposited by some chemical agent.

In 1687 James II. granted letters-patent to William Phipps to search for and get the money out of a rich Spanish vessel lost about forty years before on the coast of Cuba. Phipps's first voyage was a failure, but on a second he managed to recover no less than 200,000*l.* worth. Although similar projects had seldom answered expectations, numbers of people were so inflamed by Phipps's good fortune that quite a mania set in for trying to recover sunken treasure in almost every sea. The vessels of the Spanish Armada were a favourite source of explorations, but in nearly every case the explorers lost everything they possessed. The Duke of Leinster had a grant of all wrecks lying between

12° S. and 40° N.; but whether the owners ever had anything to say about it does not appear.

In 1693 an invention enabling people to walk under water was patented. A man walked in the machine under water from off Whitehall Stairs to below Somerset House. Many patents were granted about this time for various solid forms of ink, such as balls, powders, cakes, &c., which could be dissolved, a little at a time as required, in water, beer, or wine.

Street lamps of one or two kinds were invented and set up in London early in William III.'s reign, and were practically the first public lights. They were not at all popular, however, and people used to amuse themselves by firing at them from the windows. Their use might perhaps have rendered unnecessary the 'night engine,' a machine 'which being set in a convenient place of any house, prevents thieves breaking in and surprizing the inhabitants.'

Windmills for grinding corn seem to have been first erected at Horselydown by Evan Jones of Chester in 1696. Wind power had been used before for pumping and draining purposes, but this seems to have been its first application in England to grinding corn.

The seventeenth century ended with a patent granted to Captain Thomas Savery for what was to prove in after years incomparably the greatest invention that has yet been made for the good of the human race. Although the 'engine for raising water by fire' (steam) was for another century used for little save its original purpose of pumping, Savery's patent was the beginning of an invention which has already lasted two hundred years, with ever-increasing public benefit and utility. It has been the parent of many hundreds of other patents all over the world, though it has now probably nearly reached its limit of improvement.

The subject of patents for inventions is inexhaustible; but we must not assume that our reader's patience is equally so.

We are indebted for much of the foregoing to an admirable article on 'The Progress of the Machinery and Manufactures of Great Britain,' in the Quarterly Papers on Engineering, published by Mr. John Weale, 1846.

KENNETH.

A GOLFING STORY.

KENNETH was preposterously virtuous, and his devotion to duty literally sickening. He had always been so from the time when we were at school together at the old school near Musselburgh. It was here borne in upon me that it was my obvious duty to counteract, as far as possible, these wholly unnatural traits in his character.

At the age of thirteen, when we first made each other's acquaintance, his face was always clean, which was a direct insult in itself, and his flannels were as spotless as his face. The length of his morning and evening penance on his knees was amazing, nay, positively maddening to others who had neither the wish nor the ingenuity to prolong their devotions to such indecent lengths. It interrupted conversation and playful exchanges of sponges and boots. It was clear that something must be done to prevent him from coming to a bad end. I fought him as often as possible, but it wasn't much fun, because he always took his lickings with a resignation which would have made a saint swear. It took me nearly a whole term to discover an efficient and un-failing remedy.

It came about on this wise.

It was a very hot day in July, and Kenneth and I were lying on the grass after dinner. It was Saturday and a half-holiday. There was nothing to do, and I was racking my brains to find some possible method of irritating him.

He was lying about three yards away from me—asleep. I looked at his face; he was sleeping as placidly as a babe, Virtue stamped on every feature. I had tried to sleep and failed—and it amazed me that he should be able to rest like this after three helpings of beefsteak pie and two whole baskets of strawberries. He certainly was horribly good and had a most amazing digestion.

It was useless to tickle his nose and ears with grass, he would only roll over on his side and grunt, 'Oh, don't be a beast, Beaver,'—they called me Beaver—and go to sleep again.

I began positively to perspire with irritation, when suddenly

the cause of my first fight with him flashed across my brain. It had been at a time when I was too inexperienced myself to accurately gauge its possibilities, and I shook him by the shoulder.

'Kenneth, wake up, you lazy beast—golf!'

'Too hot,' grunted Kenneth.

'No, it isn't: come on.'

'I've broken my putter.'

'Bag your brother's.'

'Only one round, then, and we can get leave uptown and buy some strawberries afterwards.'

Now Kenneth was an erratic golfer, and golf is the one thing in the world which will unearth all the worst in man—or boy, for that matter.

The links were at the school gates, and in ten minutes we were ready at the Stand hole.

Kenneth had not only taken his brother's putter, but also his cleek and niblick.

Musselburgh was then one of the best links in Scotland. It was at the time when old Willie Park was in the zenith of his fame; when old Bob Fergusson was young Bob; and Crawford had no silver in his hair.

The green in those days was not ploughed up by the myriad iron of all the tyros in the county. It was a time when the whins grew almost from the gasworks hole to Mrs. Foreman's. The time when the 'Belt' was played for by old Tom Morris and Willie Park, and giants such as these. It was the time when 'baffy' spoons were in vogue, and the inventor of the 'Bulger' was but little more than an infant. It was the time when one could play a round in comparative safety, when there were rules to the game, and when the rules were kept.

Now they tell me that there are no whins; that the green resembles a newly-ploughed fallow; that the balls fly as thickly as the leaves in the famous shady valley; that fathers—burdened with a too plentiful offspring—send their superfluous children out on to the links on the off chance—which becomes day by day less of a chance and more of a certainty—of their being killed; that there is no Bob Fergusson; that golf has been reduced to the level of cock-fighting, in that no game is played on which some stake, be it a 'fiver' or a 'nip,' does not depend.

Golf was then, as it always must be, the king of all games, but it was more often golf for the sake of golf, and not for pelf.

Kenneth and I played for love—that is to say, for the certainty of the fight to follow.

Golf is a great game, but trying to the temper. Had it been invented two thousand years ago, there would have been no saints. In these degenerate days parsons do well not to play in black coats; nobody takes the slightest notice of a gentleman in a Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers, with a face purple with fury, from whose clenched teeth oaths of Stygian blackness issue, with a fervour which well beseems the energy but not the office of a clergyman. But if the same gentleman, dressed in a long black coat, were to stamp on the head of his putter, snap his light iron across his knee, hurl his 'mashie' at his caddie's head, or perpetrate any of those gentle pleasantries to which the irascible golfer is prone, one's idea of the general fitness of things receives a rude shock. Even if, after heeling his drive into the sea, he were to mention that his club-maker was no better than a puttyheaded owl, one would feel grieved—if he said it in a black coat. On the contrary, the same remark issuing from the same mouth would be regarded as the acme of clemency—if he said it in a Norfolk jacket. 'Manners makyth man;' but one's clothes cover a multitude of sins.

Kenneth was in form, though how he could see was a mystery to me, after the prodigious dinner he had eaten.

He was three up at Foreman's, and we halved the hole across to the sea. Then came 'Pandy.' Dear old Pandy, the receptacle of more bad language than any other spot of its size in the world.

The teeing ground was near up, and Kenneth determined to try and carry the bunker.

'I shall have a shy at it, Beaver,' he said, cheerfully.

'Oh, rather,' I answered in a confident tone, as though driving Pandy were the merest bagatelle. As a matter of fact, I had never 'carried' it up till then, nor did I until two years after.

Kenneth hit a very clean ball and landed, as I knew he would, plump in the middle of the bunker.

'Not a bad shot, Beaver; I thought I was over.'

'Not bad,' I answered, as I 'putted' gently up to within ten yards of the bunker. With my brassey I got over, and then crossed over and sat on the racecourse railings on the other side.

Now the fun was going to begin.

Pandy in those days was the very most detestable bunker on the face of the earth. It was filled with most things. Possibly old boots with 'cuddy' heels had the predominance; rocks, sea-

weed, niblick shafts, broken red tiles (where those tiles came from has always remained a mystery to me), sand, and the wraiths of long-forgotten oaths—dating back to the days when Scotland was a kingdom, and when those feckless Jameses lost their money over the royal game—helped to fill it up and render the egress of the luckless golfer doubtful—that is to say, with his clubs and temper intact.

Kenneth looked at his ball, which was half buried, and said doubtfully, looking up at me:

‘Not such a very bad lie?’

‘No, not at all,’ I answered cheerfully; ‘you only want to keep well behind, and take lots of sand.’

Kenneth took his brother’s niblick, and dropped the rest of his clubs behind him. He then ‘addressed’ his ball and took a furious shot. Now Kenneth’s brother was much taller than he, and consequently his clubs were much too long for Kenneth. Down came the niblick right on the top of the ball and ‘dunted’ it still deeper into the sand.

‘Hang this niblick!’ said Kenneth, and took another shot, with the same result. Nothing to be seen now of the ball but the merest speck of white.

It was here that Kenneth’s devotion to duty came in. He carefully took aim once more, with exactly the same result. There was no ball to be seen now. Still he went on ‘addressing’ the spot where the ball ought to be with the utmost care, and down came the niblick with a dull thud upon the sand. He did this with the same scrupulous care ten times, and human nature finally came to his aid and sent duty flying with a flea in her ear. I noticed that his face got very red, and that there was a vicious look in his eye as he glanced at me. He began to average the position of the ball, and ‘let in’ about a dozen strokes, one after the other, as quickly as he could lift and swing the niblick. He then paused for breath—I said nothing. After about half a minute he tried a little agriculture. He gave a tentative shot about two feet to the right of the ball, then another about two feet to the left, and so on until the kind Old Lady came to his assistance again, and he made the niblick fairly whizz. He then stopped for breath once more.

From the railings I said in a solemn tone:

‘Kenneth, that’s the thirty-seven more.’

I had just time to duck my head to escape certain death. I

shall never forget the grisly whirr of the niblick as it hurtled past my right ear.

The club landed on the turf of the racecourse, and the shaft broke in three places.

Kenneth picked up his other clubs and stalked out of Pandy.

'But the ball, Kenneth,' I ventured to suggest.

'Damn the ball!' said Kenneth very quickly. His face was quite white now.

'The niblick head?' I said.

Kenneth did not answer. He merely looked at me, and I was glad for my part that my niblick was intact.

'Two up and four to play, then,' I said.

Again Kenneth did not answer.

I felt hurt. If I had not brought him out of 'Pandy' he would have lashed on at that ball, or at the sand, until he had burst every blood-vessel in his body, or died of hunger and exhaustion.

It is a terrible thing to be a slave to duty.

The conversation was limited on the return journey. I only made four remarks, and they were these:

'One up, and three to play.' 'All square, and two to play.' 'Dormy one.' 'Two up and the match.'

Kenneth had not spoken till we had putted out at the stand hole, when he ejaculated:

'After tea, in the fourth form.'

So it was to be a fight after all. I was undisguisedly sorry, because I knew he would get a tremendous whacking from his brother for breaking his niblick, and I knew that the agony of soul which would succeed on that solemn 'damn' would be punishment enough for him.

We sat side by side at tea. We did not speak. It was evident he meant business. He contented himself with four hot buttered twopenny scones, one basket of strawberries, and about a quart and a half of milk.

It was in the air that Kenneth and the Beaver were going to have another 'turn up,' and our class-room was full of fourth-form boys when, half an hour before evening school, we squared up to one another.

That was the toughest fight I ever hope to have.

We seemed to have been fighting for centuries, when a sudden hush fell upon the spectators, and they slunk to their seats.

Kenneth and I fought on, until a quiet voice said :

'It is magnificent, but it is not work. McIntosh and Middleton, sit down, please, and write out the Sallust lesson fifty times.'

I always thought Sallust a fool, but since then I have regarded him with positive nausea.

We worried along after that, fighting in the usual friendly manner until we got into the fifth, when the dignity of our position put an end to it.

We went to Oxford together, and there we contented ourselves with absolutely deleting one another, verbally, in the Union. Kenneth's devotion to duty here again came to his destruction. He read himself ill, and secured a third instead of a safe first in history.

He also narrowly escaped brain fever.

Then our ways parted, and we did not meet again for some years.

I was strolling down Princes Street in Edinburgh one morning in April when I saw Kenneth hurrying towards me with a face of distress.

'Hillo, Kenneth, old man ! how are you ?'

'Beaver ! the very man ; for Heaven's sake come down to Musselburgh by the 2.10 this afternoon and make up a foursome. My boss has asked me to get a foursome, and Alexander has just thrown me over.'

'Who are the other two ?'

'There's old McQuharity, my boss, and Farquharson.'

'All right, I'll come,' I answered.

'Thanks, old chap, awfully. Good-bye till then ; I must get back to the office.'

Kenneth was in the office of McQuharity and Auchterlonie, W.S. Auchterlonie was unhappily no more, and Kenneth had told me when he left Oxford that he was going into the office of this firm, and that he hoped to be taken into partnership ; as yet, however, his hopes were unfulfilled.

Mr. McQuharity was an elder of the Kirk, a most upright and devout man, well encased in that narrow-minded Puritanism which is not altogether unknown in Scotland.

He looked with a very favourable eye on Kenneth, who never swore, nor committed any of the million follies of youth, and whose devotion to duty was beyond all praise.

I got down to the Waverley station at two, and saw old McQuharity standing beside the door of a first-class carriage.

I took off my hat to him, and said :

‘I believe I am to have the pleasure of playing golf with you this afternoon, sir?’

‘Ah, you are McIntosh’s friend?’

I said that I certainly had been, and hoped still was, his most intimate friend.

‘It’s a friendship you should be proud of, young man. McIntosh is the steadiest and most hard-working young man in Edinburgh. I may tell you that I am going to take him into partnership next Monday. It is my birthday, and I could not give myself a better birthday present. You need not mention the matter, as I want to surprise him.’

At this moment Kenneth came rushing up with a very red face, and said :

‘Has Farquharson come?’

‘I haven’t seen him, McIntosh,’ answered McQuharity.

‘I’m rather afraid I asked him for to-morrow,’ said Kenneth, looking with an expression of shame at McQuharity.

‘Never mind, McIntosh, you can play against your friend and me.’

Kenneth brightened up, and said :

‘All right, if you don’t mind, sir.’

It was a glorious afternoon, and we were in excellent terms with ourselves. McQuharity was one of those ‘pawky’ old golfers, who never do anything brilliant, but who don’t often make a mistake. ‘Fiery,’ his caddie, knew his play to a nicety, and offered him always, without being asked, the club he wanted.

McQuharity always took the club without a murmur, knowing that ‘Fiery’ knew better than he himself what he was and what he was not capable of.

All went well till we got to Pandy in the second round. As he had done fifteen years before, and for that matter as he does to this day for all I know to the contrary, Kenneth drove into Pandy. The devil must have had an off day and have come down to Musselburgh to see what was going on; anyhow, he or somebody else suggested to me to go and sit on the railings on the other side of the bunker, which I did.

Kenneth began ploughing. After about half a dozen strokes, I said :

‘Kenneth, that’s the thirty-seven more.’

' — — — — — ' said Kenneth, and the niblick took off my deerstalker cap on its voyage past my head. It then landed on the racecourse, and the shaft broke in three different places. McQuharity, who was on the other side of the bunker, dropped his cleek in amazement, and stood gazing at Kenneth with his mouth open.

Over the face of 'Fiery' stole a slow smile of delicious appreciation of the situation; that burly caddie Crawford, who was carrying for Kenneth, at first showed signs of bursting into a roar of laughter. He restrained himself, however, and said:

'Stiddy, noo, stiddy, Mr. McIntosh;' and then, turning to Fiery, he whispered hoarsely behind his hand: 'Dod, Fiery mon, did ye iver hear the likes o' yon? It was fair awfu'.'

There was no more conversation during that golf match. When we were walking up to the station nobody spoke. In the train nobody spoke. At Waverley, Kenneth offered his hand to McQuharity, who merely bowed. He did not even look at me. When Kenneth had gone, McQuharity turned to me and said:

'I told you this morning, sir, that I should make Mr. McIntosh my partner. I may now say that Mr. McIntosh is the last person whom I should think of taking into partnership. I never was so shocked in my life. Good-night, sir, good-night.'

Here was a pretty 'how-d'ye-do;' all my fault, too, as usual. I began to wish that there was no such thing as an Established Kirk, and that certain words had never been introduced into the English language. I wished Musselburgh in general and Pandy in particular had never been discovered. I cursed the man who invented golf. One thing was certain: I had got Kenneth into a very bad mess, and I must get him out of it again. I wished to goodness he had not always been so annoyingly good, and then McQuharity could not have taken so much notice. It was the sudden and total shattering of his idol which had affected him so deeply.

I set to work to find out if any of my friends were intimate with McQuharity.

I discovered that Addison, a rising young W.S., knew him very intimately, and I made him sit down there and then and invite him to dinner at his club on Saturday.

The time which elapsed between the despatch and the acceptance of the invitation was one of the most exciting and disturbing that I ever remember passing.

The invitation was accepted and I was happy. Kenneth was the other guest.

A shade of anger passed over McQuharity's face when Kenneth appeared, and he saw that he was going to dine in his company. The Elder was very much in evidence for quite two minutes, until we moved off into the dining-room.

I was sorry for Addison, but I told him it must be done, and he was in very good practice considering he was a young man. I shan't forget that dinner, nor do I think will McQuharity and Kenneth, and I am quite certain that Addison's purse felt the effects of it for a considerable time.

McQuharity, like some other Elders, took most of his religion in church; he had none to spare at the dinner-table. There are worse things than Duc de Montebello of '84 and Château La Rose of '64. By half-past eleven, over his third whisky and potash, I felt that McQuharity was ready for my proposition.

He had not spoken to Kenneth during the whole evening, and for the last hour had apparently completely forgotten his presence.

McQuharity's face wore a silly smile as he vainly tried to hum 'A wee drappie o't.' We were in the library, alone.

I took up the air and sang the first two verses, and McQuharity's smile broadened into an inane grin as he beat time with his half-empty tumbler. He was ripe for anything.

'Monday is your birthday, Mr. McQuharity. Let us all go down to Luffness and have a day there. The links are in grand order,' I said.

'Yesh, lesh all go down to Luffnesh,' he murmured.

'All right, that's settled,' I said, as calmly as I could.

Kenneth was safe now.

A few minutes afterwards McQuharity rose to go. I had previously motioned to Kenneth to leave the room.

We saw McQuharity into a cab.

'Mons'ous fine dinner, Ad'son. Till Monday.'

'313 Moray Place,' I cried to the cabby, who looked me over with contempt and said:

'As if I didna ken Airchie McQuharity.'

Kenneth came down the steps of the club, and said:

'Beaver, what on earth are you up to now? He'll never play with me.'

'Oh yes, he will. He forgot you were there to-night, and when he remembers with his soda-water at nine to-morrow morn-

ing, he won't dare to back out for fear we should think he was "buffy" to-night.'

By the first train on the following (Sunday) morning I went down to Musselburgh and saw 'Fiery.' He was obdurate at first, saying :

'I daurna', sir, I daurna'. He'll niver take me agen, and gin he tells the ithers, I'm a waster.'

'He'll never know, Fiery. He just takes what you give him.'

After the transference of some yellow coins from my pocket into Fiery's hands, he at last consented.

'You are sure there are plenty of them, Fiery?' I said at parting.

'Aye, there's a when he has na' tiched for twinty year.'

'See that you make absolutely certain.'

'Nae fears o' me, sir—I'll get Wullie to pit a bit varnish ower the heids. Trust me for the shafts.'

On the following Monday morning we met at the 'Waverley.' Addison did not turn up, at which I alone was not surprised.

'Gone on by the first train,' said McQuharity to me.

He simply ignored poor Kenneth, who wore a look of utter bewilderment.

At Inveresk I looked out and saw Fiery get into the train, and I noticed, with delight, that he was carrying a small army of clubs.

I could scarcely restrain a smile of pleasure as I drew my head in again.

When we got to Aberlady and McQuharity found that Addison was not there, he said :

'How shall we play? You and I together?' addressing me.

'Suppose you play against me and McIntosh, Mr. McQuharity, that will make a good game.'

'Very well, it's all the same to me.'

To Kenneth I said on the way to the links :

'He is to win the first round, remember, and let him get two or three up on the second.'

'But what is it all about, Beaver?'

'Wait.'

To Fiery I whispered :

'Are you quite sure you understand, Fiery?'

'Certain,' said Fiery with a grin.

McQuharity won the first round, and was in a good humour when we went in to luncheon in the tiny club house.

He would not speak to Kenneth, however. The remembrance of how with heavy eyes and aching head he had stood beside the plate in church, only twenty-four hours ago, was still very vivid. The Established Kirk was in great force in him to-day.

After luncheon we played as before, and McQuharity was 'one up' at the turn.

I looked at Fiery, whose face bore a stolid, indifferent expression.

We turned, and McQuharity won the first hole home.

'Two up and eight to play,' muttered Fiery, and teed his master's ball.

A half. 'Two up and seven to play,' said Fiery.

I looked at him; still the same expression of stolid indifference on his face.

We halved the next, and McQuharity won the following hole.

'Three up and five to play,' said Fiery, and I wondered if he was going to play me false. If he did I would brain him with my niblick.

We halved the hole.

'Three up and four to play,' said Fiery.

I got behind him and jogged him in the ribs with my 'mashie.'

'Do you understand, Fiery?' I whispered hoarsely.

He did not answer, but looked at me with a pained expression and handed McQuharity a driver.

Whizz! went the head away to the left—and I breathed again.

'Loosened the head,' said McQuharity, and walked on.

'I hae twa mair by me,' said Fiery.

Fiery let him off with his next shot, but gave him an iron with which to approach the hole, that anyone but McQuharity must have seen was a 'deader.'

He swung the club, and as the head touched the turf the shaft smashed in half.

'I haven't done that for twenty years,' said McQuharity, shortly.

'Two up and three to play,' said Fiery.

He gave his master his usual driver this time, but handed him a brassey for his next stroke, the head of which snapped in half on touching the ball.

McQuharity said nothing, but one could see that he was not pleased. Fiery muttered something about 'the clubs havin' got a bit dry,' and the game proceeded. Fiery managed it to perfec-

tion, and as we came on to the putting green of the last hole his pockets were quite full of stray driver, brassey, and iron heads, while McQuharity's face had got redder and redder.

We were all even and one to play, and McQuharity was going to play the 'odd' on the green.

Fiery handed him a putter, and glanced at me.

It was a longish putt, requiring a sharp stroke, and as the putter head touched the ball, the head slewed slowly round and looked as silly as might be. The ball went away off the line to the right.

It was then that the pent-up bad language of thirty years found egress. McQuharity's face got very white, and he let most men and most things have a turn. It lasted for full two minutes, and I could not help remarking that in his youth his vocabulary must have been extensive. There never was a man so miscalled as the unfortunate Fiery, and he consigned poor Forgan, who always made his clubs, to every possible kind of perdition. He snapped the putter shaft into tiny pieces and hurled the head at an unoffending cur who had come to see what all the noise was about, and, with a 'Burn every one of those — clubs' to Fiery, he stalked off over the wooden bridge to the main road.

Golf is a great game—but trying to the temper.

Kenneth could not quite understand it yet, but I told him I could not explain just now.

After allowing McQuharity about three quarters of an hour to 'consider himself,' we strolled up into Aberlady.

'Maister McQuharity's upstairs,' said Clark, as we went into the golf hotel.

McQuharity came to meet us on the landing; he wasn't looking very happy, but he smiled as he went up to Kenneth, and offering him his hand, said:

'The best of us are but human, McIntosh;' and then, turning to me, he said:

'Let me introduce you, sir, to the junior partner in McQuharity, Auchterlonie, & McIntosh.'

Kenneth took my arm on our way downstairs, and whispered in my ear:

'You are a good soul, Beaver, but I'll be hanged if I ever play golf with you again.'

ABOUT AMBER.

AMBER is only fossilised pine-resin.

So much everybody knows. But beyond that simple statement of geological fact, most people's ideas, I fancy, grow somewhat vague and conveniently hazy. They believe that amber was produced and hardened at that popular but rather indefinite period which is generally veiled in decent obscurity by saying 'in those days,' and then having done with it. 'Once upon a time' is the universal date in most people's geology. They picture the amber as trickling ready-made from strange, weird forests of palms and tree-ferns and gigantic horsetails, somewhere about the time when the coal measures were deposited; and they stock the wild woods they have thus dimly imagined with a grotesque collection of sea-saurians from the Lias and mammoths from the Pleistocene, flying pterodactyls from the early Oolite, and colossal deinotheria from the Paris Eocene. In short, they run together all geological time into a single tableau with charming impartiality, blandly believing creatures to be contemporary with one another which were really divided by epochs of time compared with which the distance from the Pyramid of Cheops to the Albert Memorial isn't worth taking into consideration.

Let me make for one second a historical parallel. How delightful it must have been to live in the days when Rameses II. went hunting the Greenland whale with Queen Elizabeth and Cleopatra in the leafy woods of Babylon; while Antony, mounted on his favourite dromedary, urged on the chase of the buffalo over the boundless prairies, and Alfred the Great, eager to make every child in China read the precepts of Confucius, stood surrounded by his flamens on the banks of the Euphrates, welcoming Montezuma to the opening feast at the dedication of his friend Solomon's temple! That is but a faint and feeble parody of the sort of hash ordinary mortals make of geological history, under the combined influence of popular lectures and the extinct monsters at the Crystal Palace.

Now let us see whether in this particular matter of amber we can set things straight a little—whether we can turn Charles II.

out of Semiramis's boudoir and discriminate accurately between the Age of Pericles and the Age of Reason.

Viewed by a geological as opposed to a historical standard, amber is by no means a very ancient product. It is but a thing of yesterday. At the time when it was laid down, or exuded fresh from its parent trees, the coal measures were practically as old as they are to-day. The saurians of the Lias, the winged dragons of the Oolite, were as unknown and as antiquated in that world as they are this morning in the English Channel. A pterodactyl would have excited every bit as much surprise on the banks of the Baltic in the amber age as he would excite this week on the flags of Piccadilly. The generation of crawling monsters and stiff-jointed trees had passed utterly away; and Europe was overgrown by a semi-tropical forest of quite recent aspect, far less strange and antique in fauna and flora than the Australian woodlands of the present day. In short, to the eyes of a casual observer it would have appeared that the modern period had fully set in. A Cook's tourist personally conducted from the nineteenth century into the midst of the world where amber had its birth would not notice the difference between the beasts and birds and trees around him and those which he found on previous trips in Algeria or India.

I am speaking, of course, of a general view by an unbiological observer. It is not likely he would be lucky enough to hit just at once upon an anoplotherium or a hyopotamus, which would certainly strike him as an anachronism in Regent's Park; and though the presence of a rhinoceros or a tapir might cause him just alarm, still, from the point of view of natural history, these, after all, are common objects of the Zoo—unpleasant, perhaps, when unaccompanied by their keepers, but in no wise remarkable as antique animals. Our tourist, in short, would find himself in the midst of deep green pine woods which would recall to his memory those of Southern California, while he would find them peopled by flamingoes, ibises, pelicans, and parrots which would remind him strongly of the African lakes in our own century. The general aspect of Nature would be much as we know it in the present generation.

Again, let us be more definite. Let us fix our date as nearly as we can—not to a year, indeed, or for the matter of that to a millennium, but at any rate to an epoch. That is about as much as we can do in geology. All amber is not quite of the same age; but by

far the greater part of it is derived from certain beds in Samland, on the Baltic, of the Oligocene period. Now the Oligocene, as its name imports, succeeds the Eocene, and precedes the Miocene; that is to say, it forms, as it were, the middle chapter in the history of the Tertiary or distinctively modern geological æon. If I were to venture once more on a historical parallel, I would say the primary period might be compared to the eleven centuries of English history between the landing of Cæsar and the landing of William the Conqueror; the secondary period might be compared to the five centuries between William and Elizabeth; while the Tertiary period might be compared to the three centuries between Elizabeth and the present moment. Judged by such a standard, the Oligocene, or amber age, would answer roughly to the eighteenth century.

During the Oligocene time, then, the Baltic basin and the whole of North Germany was covered by a dense forest of pines and other conifers, growing on beds of sand, in the deltaic mud of some mighty river. Many of these trees fell and rotted where they stood; and from the bits of their wood still left and from the impressions of their leaves stamped on the mud beside them (now hardened into shale) we are able to form a very clear idea of the composition of this pre-historic forest. It was semi-tropical or tropical in character, and consisted for the most part of trees extremely like our modern yews, cypresses, and firs, as well as of the giant pines of California. Conspicuous among them were the pretty salisburias, with leaves like maidenhair, now planted so abundantly on the outskirts of Florence. But interspersed with these conifers were various forms of laurel, fig, and oak, the maple and the walnut, and still more southern types like palms and cinnamon. These are the trees of India and Australia to the present day, very slightly modified in adaptation to modern needs, but still essentially the same as on the Oligocene Baltic.

The trunks and branches that fell and rotted in this ancient forest now form beds of lignite or coarse and woody coal; when black and earthy it is used for burning, but some of it, which is yellow, is employed for the manufacture of paraffin. In other words, the Pomeranian peasant kindles his fire with sticks which grew a million years ago, on a moderate computation, and lightens his darkness with the oil of trees which died and fell before humanity was dreamt of.

The animals of the amber period, and of the Oligocene

generally, were not very different from the tropical animals of our own dispensation. ('Dispensation' is a very good word, and I don't see why it should be abandoned without a struggle to the ecclesiastical authorities.) Many familiar genera had already developed, even among mammals; such are the moles, the muskrats, the shrews, the tapirs, the rhinoceroses, the civets, and perhaps the dogs. As for the birds, they were birds of a feather quite of the modern sort; while the lizards and small fry would hardly be noticed by any one on earth save an abandoned beetle-hunter. But, on the other hand, many well-known groups very useful to man were still in their infancy. The horses had only begun to exist in small ancestral types, with 'points' which nobody in Newmarket would recognise as equine; deer and cattle were unknown; and if any progenitor of the human race yet existed, it was merely in the form of some anthropoid ape, just capable of wielding a dubious club and of fashioning flint into the rudest and coarsest of hand implements. Even to admit this last possibility, indeed, is scientific heresy, for which the Royal Society would doubtless burn me; and I hasten to add that the evidence on which it rests is worse than shadowy. As a whole, the Oligocene was an age of pachyderms, predecessors of the mammoth, the mastodon, and the elephant. It was destitute of the horned ruminants, and of the larger carnivores, which now form the dominant groups in most grassy and forest-clad regions.

Such, in general aspect, was the world where amber originated. The precious gum itself flowed as resin from the pines which towered among the woodlands of the lignite beds, and especially from one tree which is scientifically known as the amber-fir. Oozing from the trees as they grew, or from injured boughs and fallen trunks, it got embedded in the ground at their feet, in a layer of greenish sand, some six feet thick, which formed the original base of the lignite forest. Hence, at the present day, it is found in lumps in this bed of sand, at or below sea level, while above it lie the layers of lignite and lignite-bearing sandstone, with yew wood and cinnamon leaves, which represent the remains of the ancient woodland.

As the turpentine oozed out, it frequently happened that flies, centipedes, and other creeping creatures got clogged and stogged in it, as is often the case to this day in our own pine-woods. The remains of these insects form the 'flies in amber' about which so much has been said and written. I am sure the long-suffering

reader will admire the self-control with which I refrain from inflicting upon him the most wearisome of stock quotations. As a rule, the insects have struggled hard for life, after getting stuck in the resin, as one can see by their torn wings and the contortions of their members; so that we get, as it were, the whole history of a prehistoric Pompeii on a small scale reproduced before our eyes after the lapse of a thousand ages. We are spectators, so to speak, of a prehuman tragedy. But sometimes the resin poured out so fast that the animal was enshrined in it almost before he knew it; and then we get the most delicate wings embalmed intact, with all their veins and branches, in the transparent material. Canada balsam, a very similar gum, is now used by microscopists for a similar purpose.

Insects undergo modification much more slowly than the higher animals, so that most of the 'flies in amber,' as well as the scorpions and spiders, belong to types still represented among us. Some of them, however, differ from existing kinds, while a few are interesting from the point of view of evolution, because they display intermediate or parental forms, half way between two or more existing species. For instance, in Northern Europe now we have two related ants, one of which is small and yellowish brown, while the other is decidedly larger and blacker. In the amber we get neither of these two types, but a common ancestor, just half way between them, bigger and blacker than the one, smaller and yellower than the other. And the transparency and perfect preserving power of the amber makes it an admirable means of observing the nature of Oligocene insects. Crustaceans and leaves have also been found enclosed in this natural framework.

After the forests of conifers which produced the amber had ceased to flourish, various events happened in Germany and Northern Europe before the age of Bismarck. From the beginning of the Miocene epoch onward, the climate of the northern hemisphere began to grow constantly colder and colder. Trees of more arctic types replaced by degrees the conifers, the cinnamons, and the palms of the Baltic. Slowly hard times came on, the elephants took to woolly coats and grew into mammoths. Ice and snow invaded the area of the sub-tropical forests—the glacial epoch had set in. For thousands and thousands of years, Glasgow and Berlin, Aberdeen and Hanover were covered by one huge pervading ice-sheet like the one which Dr. Nansen has crossed in our own time in the interior of Greenland. That was the beginning

of the modern world. The glacial epoch started things as we know them. We are not quite out of it yet. We still shiver from the effects of it.

What happened to the amber and the bed of sand in which it was buried during all that long time we can only guess at. But at any rate the gum grew hard and close, no doubt from pressure. When things came right again, and the new lord of creation, Man, began to roam once more on the shores of the Baltic, the resin of the ancient pine-woods had become strong and mineral-like, though still retaining in all essential features its vegetable properties. You can melt it if you make things hot enough—a gentle heat about three times as great as is required to boil the domestic kettle suffices for the purpose—and you can burn it if you choose, of course at your own peril. (Small boys are requested not to verify this statement on their mothers' necklaces.) When lighted, it gives out a bright flame, like most other resins, and exhales a pleasant aromatic odour. You can also deprive it, by means of ether, of all its soluble constituents, in which case its composition is found to be the same (chemically speaking) as that of camphor, which is also a vegetable exudation. In short, it is only so far fossilised as to be harder and more close-grained than most vegetable gums; in all essential respects, it still remains true to the resinous state of its childhood.

Though the largest deposits of amber occur on the Baltic, lumps are also found all over the region covered by similar forests at about the same period, as, for example, on the east coast of England, in Sicily and the Adriatic, in Siberia, Greenland, the United States, and Australia. But by far the greater part of all the amber known comes from the Baltic coast, between Königsberg and Memel; and I will say a few words by-and-by on the mode of its extraction there in this enlightened age. Meanwhile, I will touch lightly on its historical use for human adornment.

It is probable that savage man first noticed amber when torn by storms from its native bed in the sands by the sea-shore, and flung up on the beach with the pebbles and seaweed. Perhaps the most likely thing to attract his attention to it in very early times would be its singular lightness; for a good-sized lump weighs ever so much less than almost any other stone of the same size, except perhaps pumice. If, having satisfied his curiosity at a first glance, he flung it down and broke it, he would be equally struck by its clear yellow colour, like barley-sugar; not, of course,

that barley-sugar would be familiar to the primeval savage who first used amber. Moreover, he couldn't fail to observe the curious shell-like patterns with which it breaks—what science describes as its 'conchoidal fracture.' At any rate, primitive man soon learnt to smooth and polish the lumps for the decoration of his own person; and that primitive woman followed close in his steps is, to say the least, a very probable inference. Already in the interments of the Stone Age we find amber ornaments laid in the grave with the dead in many parts of Europe. Indeed, owing to its clear pale yellow colour, amber is peculiarly becoming to all dark-skinned races, and even at the present day a large part of the output of the Prussian beds finds its way ultimately to Central Africa and to the South Sea Islands. By the date of the Bronze Age the use of the pretty yellow resin 'in the arts,' as then understood, had become extremely common. Homeric chiefs rejoiced in amber decorations; a carved cup of amber has been found in a tumulus at Hove, near Brighton; while amber hilts or pommels, sometimes daintily inlaid with pins of gold, have been taken from barrows at Hammeldon Down in Devonshire, at Winterbourne in Wilts, and in many other places. Finds of this sort are frequent all over the Continent. At Hallstatt, our Bronze Age ancestors used pieces of amber for inlaying the handles and scabbards of swords; while, as to amber beads, amber buttons or studs, and amber ornaments generally, they occur too often in cemeteries of that time to call for separate mention.

Has it ever struck you as a curious fact that all early commerce was based, not on the interchange of useful products, but on the barbaric love for gewgaws and feathers, for gold and precious stones, for ivory, amber, jade, lapis lazuli, and Tyrian purple? Decoration is dearer to the soul of man than corn or sugar. It seems probable that from a very early period a trade in amber existed between the Baltic and the south and east of Europe; indeed, the direction of this trade has been traced in part by German professors. No doubt it was carried on in much the same simple way as the Arab trade with unexplored Central Africa, or as the frontier barter between uncivilised races. For ages man trafficked in gold and gems, in pearls and feathers, before commerce sprung up in grain and food-stuffs, in wool and cotton, in tea and coffee.

Furthermore, since amber is an ancient object, found in tombs and barrows, it shares with flint arrowheads and most such early

precious possessions in the common property of being an excellent amulet against disease and witchcraft. For this purpose a great demand exists in the East for amber; and quantities are used up every year at Mecca, in Mohammedan rites, to preserve the sacred shrines of that holiest of cities from the assaults of the evil one. It is probable that many of the amber ornaments buried with the dead were regarded as amulets. Indeed, whatever is valuable has mystic healing properties in various directions. Jade is holy and worshipful on its own account, and gold is a sovereign remedy in several diseases. The use of amber as a medicine had, no doubt, the same origin; but modern practice has not encouraged a scientific belief in its medicinal properties. It has dropped out of the *Pharmacopœia*, in common with many other antique remedies. Yet a volatile oil is still distilled from it which is said to be a specific for convulsions in children. Perhaps the convulsions are due to the acts of demons, and the magical power of the amber expels them promptly. Even so, the piece of gold hung round the patient's neck in the touching-cure for king's evil in itself contributed to the success of the operation. The whole treatment was magical. Our ancestors naïvely argued that so valuable a thing as gold or jade must surely be good for the gout or the rheumatics.

At the present day the supply of amber is chiefly obtained from the dreary and desolate region of Samland, on the eastern Baltic, a strange weird land of blowing sand, shifting sand-dunes, and poverty-stricken amber-hunters. It is a cold northern Sahara. The district produces absolutely nothing but amber; vegetation it has none, and from Königsberg, its capital, to the end of the promontory scarcely anything subsists that a man could live upon. Its trade is all retrospective and geological. It lives upon the memory of its Oligocene fertility. Most of the amber is obtained after stormy weather by men who wade in the water with long hooks in their hands, and secure the lumps, torn up from the submarine beds, among the floating seaweed. But a considerable portion is also got by diving. For the beds are almost all below sea-level, and it is only after heavy storms that the precious resin is dislodged in any quantities. No wonder it seemed to earlier ages a gift from the gods, very mystic and magical. Königsberg and Memel are the centres of the export traffic. The biggest lumps go direct to Constantinople, Mecca, and North Africa, partly to be used up in Mohammedan cere-

monies and partly to be carved into cigarette-holders, pipe-stems, and personal ornaments. The smaller pieces are sent to Italy, where they are manufactured into beads and other gewgaws for the annoyance of tourists; while much is exported to uncivilised countries for the further adornment of those dusky ladies so dear to the hearts of our Stevensons and our Haggards. The lumps vary immensely in size; there is one in the Berlin Museum which weighs fifteen pounds. At first sight, the ingenuous observer is apt to think no pine trees of our days produce such masses of resin. But then he should remember he is comparing a few hundred years of our cleared and stunted Europe with heaven knows how many ages of unbroken forest, and heaven knows what big groves of gigantic pine trees.

Many other economic uses have at various times been made of amber. It is good for broken hearts and blighted affections. It also yields an oil which is the basis of *eau de luce*, a famous old perfume; and by mixing *eau de luce* with nitric acid artificial musk is cunningly manufactured. Amber varnish, again, is a celebrated preservative; and it is said that Stradivari's and other Cremona violins owe to its use their fine tone and their long power of endurance. Of late years this varnish has once more been produced in considerable quantities for commercial purposes; but whether our violins will equal a Strad. when they have been kept long enough is a question on which it would be premature to express an opinion for the next half century. I need hardly add that the science of electricity owes its very origin to the working of amber, in the course of shaping and polishing which a large amount of electric energy is generated. But is it not curious to think that the power which is now just on the point of revolutionising the world should thus have become known to us first of all through the act of preparing barbaric gewgaws? In everything civilisation is based upon savagery. Our commerce is barter for two shining metals; our chemistry is an outcome of alchemy and magic.

Of course, an article of such commercial importance as amber is sure in this age of enterprise to be counterfeited, and imitation amber is extremely common. It is made of copal, camphor, and turpentine, but it can be detected by its lower melting-point and by the ease with which it softens in cold ether. Insects, leaves, and other curiosities are often enclosed in this mixture, and the same with intent to deceive, being sold to collectors as genuine

'flies in amber.' I have even had a beautiful specimen offered me which contained a whole lizard. Natural amber, when rubbed, gives off a faintly pleasant odour, but this is altogether lacking in the artificial imitation.

There is something strange and weird, when one comes to think of it, in the familiarity and commonness of so ancient a resin, the indurated gum of mighty forest trees that flourished and fell ages before man had set foot upon this planet. How little we think, when we put the mouthpiece of the matutinal pipe to our lips, that the amber which forms it exuded drop by drop a million years back from the stems of great pines in a world whose very shores and seas are now forgotten! The plants which composed those vast woodlands where the Baltic now stretches have been driven southward long since by the slow coming-on of that secular chill in the world's dotage which we call the glacial epoch. Of the pine which chiefly yielded amber not a single specimen now survives on our earth; and even the great Wellingtonias, which towered over the rest, have dwindled away in our own time to two solitary and dying groves in the uplands of California. The trunks themselves are gone or reduced to lignite, but the gum that flowed from them in such strange abundance is still a common object of commerce the whole world over, and familiar in our mouths as the pipe it holds there. Nay, more; it has supplied our language with a whole group of words—'electric,' and 'electricity,' and 'electrotype,' and so forth—and in all probability it has given us the sole clue without which we might never have possessed the telegraph and the telephone, or the unknown wonders of the next generation.

THEIR JOURNEY'S END.

THINGS were out of joint in and about Twybridge station towards sunset on a mid-August evening. In a steep grain-field a short way down the line a locomotive lay, where a locomotive clearly had no business to be, among rustling wheat-ears and nodding poppy-heads, through which it had ploughed a deep and dusty track before it had toppled over, a rather impressive spectacle of force broken loose and baffled. Fading vapours of steam and smoke still hovered round it, but for the present it was left deserted upon the clods, while at a few yards' distance a gang of professional railway-men were silently removing 'the block' amid much shouting and a little assistance from excited amateurs. It was not a very bad accident after all, though everybody agreed that there had been the makings of a first-rate disaster, only prevented by an unusual paucity of passengers and the opportune breakage of a coupling-iron. As it was, personal injuries were neither many nor serious, and but one traveller had departed to the Bourn. He, however, was undoubtedly a person of consequence, as could be learned from a glance at his luggage; and he had been, moreover, killed in a picturesque and melodramatic manner, since the flying open of a carriage-door, at the moment when his head was out of its window to see what was up, had flung him down among the wheels, with a sequel of ghastly entangling, dragging, and crushing, upon which none save a special correspondent or a tragic Greek *"Ἀγγελος"* should presume to dilate.

Up at the little station itself a springtide of flurry and fuss was slowly subsiding, but still stood above high-water mark in the distracted countenance of the short stout station-master. The first-class waiting-room was filled with an unassorted group of passengers, there bestowed until the broken thread of their journey could be mended. They were all more or less shaken in body and mind, and as a rule loquaciously disposed, treating the same theme with variations ranging from the tirade which its wrathful declaimer would next morning shape into a newspaper-letter to the suaver utterances of a plump middle-aged dame, whose con-

gratulatory remarks about Providence were rejoined to with snappish logic by an aggrieved bagman, while her subdued-looking husband, who had sustained a somewhat excruciating contusion of the elbow, could not wholly dissemble a kind of joy as he listened to the dialogue.

One passenger, however, sat persistently dumb, entrenched in the most retired corner with an air of abstracted gravity, upon which nobody dared intrude, so appropriate did it seem to his situation. For he had been the travelling companion of—what now lay in the third-class waiting-room, a fact which made nervous people huddle together at the furthest end of their own apartment and feel chills whenever the door between was opened, or they heard heavy feet clumping on the other side of the lath-and-plaster partition. In consideration of his affliction and presumable social standing as the friend of a millionaire Scotch baronet, whose magnificence was known even among the byways of Croftshire, he had been offered accommodation in the station-master's private room, but had rightly counted upon finding more immunity from conversational claims when merged with the unprivileged outsiders. What had befallen him was shocking enough to make it natural that he should wish for a space wherein to collect himself. His friendship with Gillespie Feraston had lasted through several years, at a time when years are young and long, and had furthermore been toughened by the process of rough kneading which such metal undergoes in the course of a torrid campaign, where there are encampments prowled round by famine and pestilence, and occasionally fields rife with compacter forms of death 'whizzing in the air' like the exhalations in Brutus's orchard. And on this very afternoon, the eve of his wedding-day, as he slid across the breadths of green and gold harvest-land, that one-tenth of his thoughts which was not exclusively reserved for Miss Ellice Shane had been mainly occupied by 'old Gil' and his many excellent qualities and kindly deeds.

The latest of these was writ large in Gil's presence there, prisoner for seven sultry hours in a blue-cloth padded cell, with two splendid shooting-days sacrificed to the dismal duty of acting as poor Tom Denmer's best man, that good office which no friend can ever repay in kind. But Tom recollected many others, remoter in date, yet not less clear in memory than the proofs of friendship which had been directly elicited by his engagement—the Highland castle and Mediterranean yacht placed at the dis-

posal of bride and bridegroom—the sumptuous plate and superb emeralds, which gave such brilliance to the else unimposing array of wedding presents on view in the dingy library at Hinthorpe Grange. Perhaps Tom unconsciously turned in preference to the earlier rather than to these more modern instances, because meditation upon the latter would sometimes mingle with wishes that it were in his own power to lay the like desirable things profusely at his *fiancée's* feet—very bootless aspirations for 300*l.* a year and one's pay. Such discontents, however, were mere fleeting cloud-flecks, with scarcely substance enough to throw a shadow as they passed. For, given Ellice, what was the whole world beside? Almost a fraction with infinity for its denominator, which, as everybody knows, equals nought.

And now here was the summary end of all—wealth, and sport, and campaigning, and the comradeship which was to have triumphantly stood the crucial test of matrimony, but had found a harder one inexorably imposed by fate. On the way up to the station Tom had heard the four men speak once or twice of what they were carrying as ‘it,’ and the little monosyllable had appealed more forcibly to his imagination than volumes of threnodic eloquence could have done. The long western rays and the commonplace objects which they slanted dazzlingly upon seemed suddenly invested with a sort of familiar unreality, as if he had always known them to be only shams, and the inward effect of this was so curiously bewildering that it made him fitfully apprehensive lest his outward mien should appear correspondingly strange. Even before the dust of a world-cataclysm has begun to settle, a man instinctively reckons with neighbours’ eyes. But, in fact, nobody was surprised to see him sit like one who had been stunned, gazing blankly at the floor, or aimlessly unfolding and folding a sheet of white paper which he held in his unsteady hand. He had quite sufficient reason, everyone thought, for being dazed and confounded; and he presently had more than they guessed.

That bit of paper had been handed to him as he entered the waiting-room by a solemn guard, who said: ‘Picked this up down yonder, sir; ain’t sure whether it b’longs to you, or might ha’ dropped out o’ t’ other gentleman’s coat when they were a-lifting him.’ ‘It’s mine,’ Tom had answered unhesitatingly as he saw the handwriting, and, having taken the note, he continued to hold it automatically for some minutes, sitting there in his corner, until in the same mechanical fashion he unfolded it, and began to

run his eyes along the lines, with so little thought, indeed, of what they were doing, that they read it through twice before the fact dawned upon him that it was *not* his after all—had never been meant to meet his eye, though it was written by his Ellice's hand, and signed with her name, and smelt still of the cedarwood box in which she kept her envelopes. It was not a long note, nor difficult to understand, when one gave one's mind to it; and it ran as follows:—

'I will be at Tollenford Junction to-morrow evening in time to meet the quarter to seven train. You will find me somewhere in the lane not far from the railway bridge, the one near the gate into the hilly field with the queer-shaped elder-bush—you know the place. There is no train on, I fear, for more than an hour; however, that can't be helped. I think we had better go straight to the *Foam Bell*, as it would not take long to get to Glynmouth; but we can settle all that when you meet yours ever,—ELLICE.'

There was neither date nor address, but this did not obscure the purport of the little missive. It all seemed very clear and plain to Tom, as he surveyed the situation dispassionately, going over the circumstances in his own mind quite coolly and quietly. An avalanche, too, is sometimes deliberate and even gentle in its movements, when it begins to slide down the bare slope, until its smooth white lip grows into a swelling frieze along the crest of the dark crags. After that, there is less to be said for its self-control. Tollenford Junction—yes, that was the next station but one to Hinthorpe, Ellice's home, and a branch line ran from it to Glynmouth, where Gil's yacht lay within reach, as she said. And, to be sure, Gil had mentioned on starting that he must stop so far short of Hinthorpe and follow Tom by a later train, as he wanted to look up an old friend at Tollenford. Why, just before the accident happened he had fished down his hat and pocketed his cap, for they were coming near the place, and uncertain whether there would be a stop on the way—a doubt set at rest with a fine irony by the very full stop which had intervened. Tom remembered having felt pleased at the time to think that, since Gil wished to see this old friend, he would not have his long journey quite for nothing. His *long* journey—*how* long had it been? That new blank shadow seemed to unfurl itself at Tom's feet, turn where he would; all the more shockingly now when he ever and anon lost sight of it in the sudden thunder-glooms which were shifting and drifting round him on a stormy wind.

How smoothly and pleasantly they had arranged their plans! The convenient rendezvous—the glib matter-of-fact lie—the white-winged yacht ready close by to carry them off over sunny seas; they could not have picked out a finer evening in the whole summer. No hitch apparent, except just that hour's wait for the Glynmouth train. Probably, however, they would not find the time drag unendurably. Otherwise, why didn't Gil order a special? The expense would be nothing to him—as it happened, literally nothing at all. Good heavens! was he going mad, and possessed by a devil too? or what was he sneering at? Again that shadow before him, very dark and cold.

'The gate into the hilly field'—Ellice might be waiting there by this time, for it must be getting near seven o'clock. There was a train from Hinthorpe about six, which he used to catch when he ran down on a day's leave; fourteen hours of third-class compartment to, it might be, half a dozen at the Grange. All through that afternoon Tom had more or less had in his imagination a picture of Ellice waiting and watching for someone, so it was perhaps unreasonable of him now to be utterly taken aback by the idea, as if it were an unprecedented horror sprung upon him; but then the someone had not been Gillespie Feraston, which certainly made a great difference. Such an immense one, in fact, that he could grasp it only by degrees; and as he began gradually to realise its full scope and bearings, something of the nature of an insurrection rose up in his mind against the imposition of this novel and monstrous article of belief, based on a wretched scrap of paper. A counter-current of passionate doubt and denial rushed in to oppose the murky flood which had suddenly swept over his securest trust and pride, and the ensuing turmoil waxed so fierce that he could no longer keep up even the outward semblance of calm. He started to his feet without any definite purpose beyond the blind impulse of strong feeling to translate itself into action; and the course it was to take was unwittingly determined by the station-master, who at this moment entered the room.

He came to announce, with considerable self-complacency, the completion of the arrangements for forwarding the delayed travellers upon their way, a result which he regarded as wholly due to his own administrative abilities.

'Ardly arf an hour behind time arter all,' he said blandly; 'not much to complain of, I'm sure, gentlemen, under the cir-

circumstances. The signal's down, and she'll be steaming in directly.'

An approaching screech corroborated the statement, and Tom simultaneously formed a resolution. 'It stops at Tollenford Junction?' he said, putting up the note and going towards the door.

'Certainly, sir; due there at seven-ten. But you aren't leaving, sir?' said the station-master in a remonstrant tone, for such a proceeding did not by any means accord with his sense of the fitness of things. 'There'll be a deal of arrangements to make, sir, you'll be aware. I was just coming to consult you when I'd started these here. What about telegrams? and the Hynque——'

'I'll come back directly—by the next train,' said Tom, his purpose consolidated by this slight shock of opposition. 'There'll be time then for all that. It's absolutely necessary for me to go.'

That was true enough. The complex torment of suspense, the crushing weight of fear, the fluttering of a feeble hope, the sting of amazed wrath, even a feeling of common consideration for the girl, who at that very moment might have begun to wonder ignorantly about the cause of an unaccountable tarrying—all these impelled him to go and meet the worst. His fate cried out and told him that the supreme crisis could be neither evaded nor postponed. So in a few minutes he was again on his way through the last glow of the mocking golden sunlight, leaving behind him the place where he had seen one tract of his life overwhelmed by a swift surging up of chaos, and had received more than a warning that all the rest of it would presently lie shattered around him in irremediable ruin. And with every pant of the engine that brought him nearer to his goal the tension of his nerves tightened more and more in the grip of the surmise—he dared not call it by a less ambiguous name: What would he find when he got there?

What he would find was a question which, at more than one period in the course of that day, might have puzzled the most far-seeing onlooker to answer with confidence, despite the decisive tone of Miss Shane's compromising little note. Perhaps the event had wavered most dubiously in the balance about three o'clock in the afternoon, when Mrs. Shane, hearing a light step on the stairs, had sent a shrill call of 'Ellice' from the faded blue-room of Hinthorpe Grange, where, with the help of a deeply-

interested housemaid, she was packing up part of her daughter's modest trousseau. The bride-elect came and stood for a minute in the doorway. A graceful but not slenderly-fashioned figure, more than commonly tall, rich coils and silky ripples of blue-black hair, a pale olive complexion, a mouth 'softe and reed,' like Chaucer's Prioress's; very dark eyes, 'alive in their depths,' like Lord Walter's wife's—that was Ellice Shane at nineteen. Her mother had called her in to show her some small ornamental additions to the outfit after which the girl had hankered, and which Mrs. Shane, by dint of much painstaking ingenuity, had managed to elicit from scanty resources for a parting surprise. Ellice, with the matter-of-course carelessness of a spoiled child, did not trouble herself to express any lively gratitude on the occasion; yet as she looked at the unfolded skirts and half-filled trunks, and general litter of odds and ends, which, as she knew, represented prolonged industry, both mental and manual, on the part of her mother, she suddenly experienced a violent attack of the spasmodically recurring conviction that she could not possibly carry out her meditated treachery. Through this trivial instance of her mother's affection and care for her the capricious track of her thoughts somehow led her to the larger fact of Tom's devotion, the proved ardour and loyalty of which seemed all at once to shine transfigured against the dark background of that perfidious requital.

As Ellice stood by the door, to all appearances rather minutely examining a lace collarette, her thoughts were travelling far afield in a very desperate hurry. Only broken and incoherent fragments emerged into clear consciousness out of the bewildering whirl, but their drift was unmistakable enough.

'I don't—no, I *don't* care for either of them; but I could for Tom, if I chose—never for the other. They're both much too good for me, though, that's certain. Why is Tom so poor, and so bent upon sticking to that stupid regiment? I dare say he could make his fortune somehow if he left it. Would Sir Gillespie tell if I gave it all up now?' Miss Shane had hardly outgrown the schoolgirl's phraseology. 'I don't believe he would, if I asked him not—he's very good; it was all my fault. But—but even if he did, I think I could trust Tom to stand by me. Poor Tom! How could I manage to send a message to Tollenford in time? There's the Johnsons' boy, only he's so stupid. . . . ' Whence the reader will perceive that the scales were very nicely poised

indeed. This state of instable equilibrium was, however, of but short duration, being overthrown by one of those trifles, seemingly light as air, which, in the hands of fate, often acquire a portentous specific gravity.

Mrs. Shane was a person of constitutionally restless and anxious mind, as any one might have guessed from her meagre frame, jerky movements, and face etched over with a network of fine wrinkles, due less to her fifty years than to the domestic economies of a large household yearly growing more expensive in defiance of a small and stationary income. Her fidgety eye was now caught, and her thrifty soul vexed, by what struck her as her daughter's excess of apparel.

'My dear,' she said, in the tone of one who anticipates yet cannot forbear to risk a rebuff, 'why have you put on that nice new tweed? It's a pity to wear it out here. One of your old dresses that you are leaving behind would have done very well for to-day, and then I could have packed that up.'

Ellice listened with an altogether incommensurate revulsion of feeling. The vaguer images which had been floating through her mind—Tom's despair—a consternation-stricken home—all the menacing possibilities of an untried future—these vanished like a mist before the sharply-outlined presentment of certain hard, sordid, and familiar facts. And though she replied with unwonted amiability: 'Oh! I'll be sure to change it in time,' she said doggedly to herself, 'I *will* make an end of it. I *will* get done with all this pinching and screwing and worrying. What is the good of one's life if one can have nothing that one likes? I know I shall like being rich, and at any rate I can make sure of being that.'

An hour or so later Ellice stole down one of the Grange's overgrown shrubberies, and out through a small side gate which opened into the churchyard. Her field-path route led across a corner of it; but as she came near the church she heard sounds which made her slip behind the screen of a thick yew-hedge. A group of young people, chiefly girl-contemporaries of hers, had been preparing decorations for the morrow's ceremony, and were now with abundant chatter and laughter conveying into the porch the coils of a long gariand composed of wheat and poppies and cornflowers. As Ellice furtively peeped and overheard, she gave a momentary regret to the thoughts of a shimmering white silk gown and a misty veil hung in her wardrobe at home; but

she conquered the pang with a charm which contained the potent names of 'Lady Feraston' and 'diamonds.' Just then, happening to glance at her gloveless hand, she saw that she had forgotten to take off Tom's ring, a pearl hoop with ruby sparks, which had cost much more than he could well afford. Close to where she stood was the tomb of one Henry Chapman, Esquire, a stately drab-brick structure, adorned on the side with a black marble urn enveloped in white marble drapery sculptured in high relief. The folds of this drapery were full of rain, which had fallen in the night. Ellice remembered how, not so long ago, she had enjoyed dabbling in them with smaller fingers; and into one of them, prompted by a half-childish freak of fancy, she now dropped her ring. The gold and pearls flashed bright gleams after her through the water and sunshine as she turned away. All the girls had gone into the church, and she could continue her journey safely.

When Tom's train arrived at Tollenford Junction the sun had almost finished setting with a grandeur quite thrown away upon him. It was with feelings wholly apart from any æsthetic appreciation of flames and amber light that he saw how a plantation of mingled elms and firs to the left made a pattern of clubs and spear-heads sombrely against the clear saffron sky; he only recognised it as a remembered landmark which showed that he was nearing the place. At this time he for a few moments entertained thoughts of going on straight to Hinthorpe, lured by a heavenly vision of there, after all, finding Ellice innocently waiting for him among her hollyhocks and roses in the twilit Grange garden, and of blissfully awakening from the diabolical nightmare of suspicion which that miserable paper-scrap had conjured up around him. But he soon averted his eyes resolutely from this fair mirage; and when the train stopped he stood up, though his knees shook and his pulses were knocking double knocks in his throat and temples, and stepped out on to the deserted platform with considerably less equanimity, it is true, than if it had been occupied in force by hostile wielders of assegais or antique-patterned rifles. Tollenford is never a centre of much traffic, and on that evening very few passengers alighted, and nobody else was in sight, except a porter, busily engaged in getting details of 'the accident down below' from the guard, and borrowing a newspaper to ascertain the fate of his half-crowns among the sporting intelligence; also an extremely ancient decrepit man, who sat on a distant bench.

Tom, to whom things still seemed unreal and uncanny, felt rather at a loss as he stood looking across the rails towards the elaborately rustic station-house, with its trim flower-borders of scarlet, yellow, and blue, and trails of purple-blossomed creeper. He naturally did not wish to draw attention upon himself and his errand by inquiries, yet he could not tell in what direction he must look for the lane with the gate into the hilly field. 'Of course I don't "know the place" so well as Gil does,' he said bitterly to himself, and once more was caught up short by the incongruous tense. It appeared obvious, however, that the first thing to be done was to get over to the other side, where lay the exit from the station, and he accordingly ascended the white lattice-work bridge by which the public are enjoined to effect the passage, not venturing upon the permissible 'forthrights' of officials.

The high-striding bridge offered a convenient post of vantage whence to survey the topography of the unfamiliar neighbourhood, and Tom paused on the top to look about him. Light was by this time ebbing steadily, but had not yet mixed with the dimming tide of dusk; objects were still almost as clear as at noon, and his eye was immediately caught by two figures, who, at perhaps a hundred yards' distance, were walking away from him along a footpath which skirted the edge of the embankment where it rose steeply above the line. One of them was Ellice; that he needed no second glance to assure himself of this will be easily understood by all who are aware how the sharpness of lovers' eyes recognise their lady in the flutter of a ribbon-end, as an expert osteologist can construct a palæolithic saurian from an inch or two of vertebræ. And at first sight he affirmed with equal certitude that her companion was Gil. So indisputable did this appear that, although a host of ghastly recollections at once sprung up imperiously commanding him to dismiss such a wild hallucination, he looked again and again, and could not effectually contradict the present evidence of his senses. It was only by degrees that he argued himself into acceptance of what he must needs regard as propositions of reason. He could swear—following with strained gaze the receding figures—he could have sworn that it was Gil; but—but maybe a mistake of the kind was natural enough under the circumstances—it certainly was getting duskish—and the confusing want of individuality in the British male costume might account for much—no doubt it was all

imagination—the figures were further off now, and less distinct—of course, in fact, it *could* be nothing else.

But, then, who *was* walking there with Ellice? Manifold were the hypotheses which crowded into the vacuum left by the abandonment of his first untenable theory. Was it merely some casually met acquaintance? Or had her flight been detected and overtaken? Or had Ellice herself laid a trap for the false friend, and sought the rendezvous attended by her prim parson uncle or big undergraduate brother, in approved old farcical fashion? If so, the farce had abruptly developed into tragedy with a complete disregard of all established rules. Tom's mind was full of these and other more or less likely conjectures as he hurried down the opposite side of the bridge and set out in pursuit of that pair. They were not walking fast, and he gained rapidly upon them, until he purposely slackened his steps. Countless chill fears and reluctances made him shrink and shiver on the brink of the plunge into sheer certainty. And amongst these one monstrous dread presently began to loom predominant like an iceberg through an arctic fog; for, as he drew nearer and nearer, that first impression, which he had banished at the bidding of hard facts, returned to him, reinforced by an array of facts no less obdurate—the testimony of his senses—of eyes that to their amazement did behold—of ears, loath to admit, yet powerless to bar their portals. Gil—it was his friend Gil, and nobody else, whom he saw Ellice following along that narrow footpath! Let rise what forbidding visions would of ugly sights that cried out upon the one before his eyes, there it was notwithstanding, and could not be scared away. Every suggestion of possible mistake or illusion became liable to a flat contradiction; Tom might as well have tried to feel doubtful about the studs in his cuffs or the crunch of his own footsteps upon the gravel. More than once Gil looked back at Ellice, thereby showing his face in full, with sun-tanned complexion, tow-coloured moustache and all just as usual. They appeared to be carrying on an animated conversation, and the sound of both voices came to Tom with perfect familiarity, though he could not catch the purport of what they said, while ever and anon Gil's well-known shrill-pitched laugh seemed to set incredulity in a purely ludicrous light.

This conviction, thrusting itself irresistibly upon Tom's belief, came accompanied by a feeling of profound horror, equally irresistible in its entry, and more pervasive in its seizure of every

faculty and sense. It must be owned that his immediate impulse was to turn and flee, an impulse only routed after a sharp skirmish between soul and legs. The impossibility of leaving Ellice to her unimaginable fate in that fearful companionship did eventually stand its ground as a cogent and coercive fact; but this was by dint of a rebellious struggle of his higher against his lower nature, altogether different from the swift simultaneous rallying of all powers mental and physical which the perception of any mere mortal peril to her would have evoked. Such has ever been the recoil of the astounded body when a spirit goes before its face.

Having definitely decided not to run away, Tom saw no course open save to follow the steps of his two friends until he either gained courage to spontaneously interrupt their *tête-à-tête* or was compelled to do so by force of circumstances. He held on, therefore, at a wary distance, faring towards the fading western glow; and as he went the grotesquely elongated shadows of the pair in front stretched back to him, sometimes almost reaching to his feet. Once, indeed, he actually trod on the faint outline of Gil's head, and stood still for a moment, stricken with a sort of benumbing panic. Then on again, along the rising and sinking slopes of the embankment; past thrifty patches of potatoes or kidney-beans, trimmed screens of clipped laurels, unkempt clumps of trailing brambles, and regularly recurring telegraph-posts with their dolorous drone, for what seemed an interminable tract, though in reality it was not a very large fraction of a mile. At last it ended.

They had come to a place where the high path, which here tended downwards, made an abrupt sweep to the left hand, curving out on the face of a smooth-swarded glacis, instead of leaving, as hitherto, a yard or so of grass-border to fend off the outer edge. The cause of this aberration was obvious enough, since the track, if continued undeflected for a few paces more, would have arrived at the brink of a great red-walled chasm, originally filled by Nature with a huge block of sandstone, but long ago laboriously scooped by man into a deep quarry-hole. An inadequate attempt had been made to exclude trespassers from those dangerous premises—where they were so likely to get beyond the reach of legal prosecution—by means of a feeble and futile fence, which at present with its prone uprights and dishevelled wires left nothing to impede the wayfarer's access save some tangled wisps of long grasses.

And now Tom saw with unspeakable consternation that Gil, instead of keeping to the footpath, was walking on in a straight line, which in less than half a minute must lead him to the verge of the precipice, and that Ellice was unconcernedly following. The sight filled him with a despairing wrath, which at the outset paralysed him as if by a spell, and then goaded him into action. For the first time in this horrible crisis of his fate he felt impelled to make a desperate struggle against it, and springing forward he tried to raise a shout of warning, but his throat was parched, and the hoarse strangled croak which he uttered suggested quinsy rather than mortal anguish. Ellice, however, was reached, and for an instant arrested by the sound. She paused, not a yard from the edge, and half turned round; but at this moment Gil stooped his face close to hers and said something to her in a low hissing whisper, which slid in and out of the silence as a scorpion glides rustling between two stones; and before it had ended she had put her hand in his and taken one step more—over the brink. A shriek—a crash of snapping twigs and clatter of rolling pebbles—at last a dull thud—and that was all!

The headlong leap forward, by which Tom sought to intercept or follow, proved a vain endeavour, for he caught his foot in a nooselike grass tuft, so that, baulked of dashing sheer down the precipice, he only fell, with a violently wrenched ankle, upon a shelving briar-grown ledge, quite close to the top. And when his stunned senses after a while crept dimly back, he made no second attempt to join Ellice. He felt dazed and cold, and sick with the pain in his wrenched ankle; and it is not easy to pluck resolve from such physical conditions. So he dragged himself up again to the hole's mouth, where he lingered aimlessly for, as it seemed, many ages, until a bewildered notion that help should somehow be sought on Ellice's behalf aroused him from his lethargy and sent him moving again through what was now a dark night. But he had lost hold of even this vaguely guiding purpose before his intermittent groping and stumbling brought him back to Tollenford Junction, and when he reached it he did nothing more effectual than sit down on a stack of sleepers in a siding. Here he was found, about sunrise, by two labourers on their way to work. They were slow-witted, unimaginative persons, yet did not fail to arrive at the conviction that there was 'summat mighty queer' about this stranger, who, in reply to their inquiries, said he was waiting there for Gil—his friend, Sir

Gillespie Feraston, and then suddenly clapped his hands to his ears, exclaiming *daft-like*: 'You needn't tell me—you needn't tell me—I saw it go over his head.'

As Tom's answers to further questioning, official and amateur, were scarcely more lucid and coherent, it is fortunate that people had not to depend upon him for an account of the circumstances attending his *fiancée's* terrible fate, which was brought to light in the course of that day by the discovery of her dead body at the bottom of the pit. An explanation, in every way far more satisfactory, indeed, than he could have supplied, was clearly forthcoming. For Ellice's old nurse, one Mrs. Hadden, a North-country widow much crippled by rheumatism, lived in a lonely little cottage not far from the fatal quarry-hole and a certain hilly field of which mention has been made, and Ellice was wont to visit her occasionally, taking a short cross-country route. She had done so, it had been remarked, more frequently than usual through the past summer, and there was now nothing antecedently improbable in a theory that she had paid a farewell visit on the eve of her wedding. This fact, however, was lifted above the plane of hypothesis by some perfectly conclusive evidence. Not only had Ellice told her mother where she was going, but the old woman herself could testify that she had received a visit. Her own often-repeated account of it was to the following effect:

She should say it was well on past seven o'clock; anyway the dusk had begun to close in, and she was hirpling about the grass bit by the door: 'Pulling myself a bunch o' poppies I was, for I've a fancy to keep a mug o' them by the bed o' nights; they make a body sleepy like, when I looked up, and what should I see but poor Miss Ellice standing outside the little gate. I was surprised enough at that, never expecting she'd ha' had time to come that evening, and it being so late and all, and I thought maybe she was meaning just to bid me good-bye as she passed, so I hobbled down to her as best I could and asked her in. But says she, sure enough, "No, nurse, I mustn't wait," she says, "I'm only come to say good-bye." I noticed she was looking a bit white and peaky, and says I to her, for she seemed to be minding the bunch o' poppies I had in my hand: "You'll be wearing bonnier flowers than these to-morrow, Miss Ellice," I says; but all she said to that was: "There are redder ones up at the old quarry-hole." And says I: "Eh, now, Miss Ellice, don't be clambering about

there, for I'm told it's a shocking dangerous place, and one you'd never get out of if you happened to slip in." And says she: "Oh, no fear of that—but I must go." And with that she went off in a hurry like as if she'd heard somebody calling. I thought maybe one of the young gentlemen, or the captain, was waiting for her. "No fear of that," she says—and they to be finding her there the very next morning!

Hence it was easy enough—this brief colloquy having incidentally given so obvious a clue—to understand how the disaster had come about: Ellice, stopping on her way home to pluck those red poppies which grew profusely round the quarry-hole's treacherous brink, had overbalanced herself, or missed her footing, and fallen in. Such a simple explanation was not likely to be discredited by any wild and impossible statements which might proceed from poor Tom, who lay raving in a fever, the not unnatural result of a great mental shock, aggravated, perhaps, by some more mechanical injury to the brain, sustained unawares in the railway accident. Nor, when he recovered, as he did before the end of the month's leave, which should have contained his wedding tour, was there any danger of his disturbing those reasonable inferences by a more intelligible version of the strange story whereupon his delirious wanderings had harmlessly turned. For his resumption of his faculties was not *quite* complete, his memory, as often happens in like cases, having passed an act of oblivion with regard to all that had taken place immediately before the coming on of his illness. Thus, every event of his journey to Tollenford being blotted out, he had to learn anew the fate of his friend and of his *fiancée*; and as Ellice's luckless note had fluttered away somewhere, and was seen no more, he never regained his knowledge that they had both been lost to him while they were yet alive.

This ignorance was probably, on the whole, a happy one for Tom, whose disposition would have made it very hard for him to 'scorn and let go' anything of which his affections had once taken a grip. Perhaps, too, it did not utterly mislead him, after all. The friend who had stood by him loyally in more than one emergency was as real a person as he who had turned traitor under stress of a later temptation. And it may be that Ellice's inglorious conquest by a hankering after the world's gear would not have proved final and irretrievable. These speculations, how-

ever, have no practical bearing upon the fortunes of Tom, who changed his regiment and went eastward—

To an old palm-land of tombs,
Washed clear of our yesterday,

where life seemed easier to face again.

Ellice's engagement-ring still lies in the folds of the marble napkin on Mr. Chapman's ugly brick tomb, and will possibly lie there until her story is quite forgotten in the neighbourhood, so that the finding of it may evolve many ingenious conjectures as to how it came into so unlikely a receptacle. But the chances are that nobody's invention will hit upon a more tragical explanation than one which, as we know, 'is true 'tis pity.'

OUR STONE CRUSADERS.

THERE is a popular impression concerning the sculptured effigies of the knights of old that enrich so many of our ancient churches to the effect that when they are wrought with their legs crossed at the ankles it is to record the fact that those they represented made one journey to the Holy Land, or took part in one crusade; and when they are fashioned with their legs crossed at the knees, it is to indicate that the brave men whose memory they were meant to perpetuate journeyed three times across Europe to the same sacred site; and when the legs are crossed midway between the ankles and the knees, it is because the knights in question made but two of these long and perilous journeys. It would, perhaps, not be very difficult to ascertain whether this impression is founded on fact, for we should have but to look into the personal histories of a convincing number of such of the individuals thus represented who can be identified, and note whether the attitudes in which they are sculptured correspond with their achievements in this particular; but it is sufficient for our present purpose merely to mention it. Another impression that has been current concerns the disposition of the hands of these relics. When the hands are sculptured as folded in prayer, they have been fancifully translated to mean that the dead knight represented had returned from the crusade, and had died in peace at home; when wrought in the act of drawing his sword, that it was to show that he had died in battle, fighting for the Holy Land; and when placed as sheathing his sword, that he had died on his way home, after his mission was accomplished.

We are often more attracted by these memorials when we come upon them in our village churches than when we see them in our cathedrals and great abbey churches with their more sumptuous surroundings. Sometimes in such simple edifices, even in remote places, they are much mutilated, occasionally to the extent of half their original proportions; and sometimes they are so completely detached from all evidence of ownership as to baffle every attempt at identification; but, for the most part, we find them undisturbed in their stately deathfulness and mute appeal. Their lifelike size, their inscrutableness and seclusion,

the sacredness and silence of their associations, the acute sense of the lapse of centuries since those who sculptured them awaited the commendations or adverse criticisms of the mourners at whose bidding they had wrought, and our realisation of our own remoteness from the tone and feeling of the old old times to which they belong, produce an effect upon us that is difficult to describe accurately.

In Banbury Church, Essex, there are three of these effigies all clad in chain armour. Two of them lie under arches in the north wall, and the other is placed against the east end of the north aisle. They are all cross-legged, and their feet all rest on lions; but each man and each lion is in a different position. The hands of one knight are folded and his sword is sheathed, and the lion at his feet is looking towards his face. One of the others is in the act of drawing his sword, and the lion at his feet is turning his head away from him; and the third is sheathing his sword, whilst the lion looks straight before him. They are all now nameless and unknown. There is a handsome effigy of a Crusader in Hacombe Church. His legs are crossed at the knees. He is clad from head to foot in beautifully ornamented armour which has a foliated pattern wrought upon it, over which is disposed a long tunic open at the knees. With both hands, which are gauntleted, he grasps his sword. His head lies on a small cushion placed cornerways on a larger one, and his feet rest on a lion. Only the tip of his nose has been damaged in the centuries that have passed since this memorial was placed in its present position. In Holbeach Church, Lincolnshire, on a richly-sculptured but now crumbling tomb, lies an effigy with the legs not crossed at all, but straight and outstretched against a crouching lion. His sword is now broken and his shield frayed at the edges, but as the light shines upon the prostrate form one cannot but be impressed by it. In Beer Ferris, in flowery Devonshire, under an arched recess in the ancient church, reposes the figure of a knight clad in chain armour, the legs of which have been broken off at the knees, where they were crossed, and carried away. Notwithstanding this mutilation there is an effect of endurance and persistence as well as pathos about this form that is very attractive.

Passing from village to village, in this way, across the breadth and length of our pleasant land, we will look into Chillingham Church, on the borders of Chillingham Park, where the wild white cattle of the ancient Britons still roam at large, and where the

Cheviots make a vast jagged boundary between England and Scotland. This little edifice, which was built so long ago as the days of Norman rule, has been kindly dealt with, in so far as only a few additions have been made to it, and much of the original fabric is left standing. Two of the principal additions—and these were made four or five hundred years ago—are north and south aisles to the chancel. And in the south aisle, on a large tomb, repose two life-sized effigies, the one being a knight and the other his wife, with two angels kneeling at their feet. One end of the tomb is built close up against the western wall of the aisle, but on the other three sides we may see there are panels filled with figures and heraldic devices alternately. From the heraldry it is clear that these effigies represent Sir Ralph Grey, who died in 1443, and his wife, Elizabeth Fitz-Hugh. For four centuries and a half, then, in this remote little structure, these figures have lain unharmed; only the gilding and bright colours with which parts of the monument were once adorned give any indication of the wear of time, though some years ago ivy found its way through the walls and hung in festoons from the under side of the roofs of both nave and chancel, and other signs of indifference were apparent in it. Sir Ralph Grey and Elizabeth Fitz-Hugh (who, it may be noticed, was entitled to quarter the arms of Marmion) probably lived in Chillingham Castle, close by, more than two hundred years before Inigo Jones built the columniated frontage to it that we now see.

In another village church in the same county there is a fragment of a sculptured knightly effigy that has not been so well used. This lies, or rather stands, for it has been placed on end, in Bolam Church, a structure of Saxon antiquity. This is one of the instances in which identification is impossible, as it is no longer associated with any heraldic intimation. It consists of the upper part of the figure, which is represented as clad in chain armour. In a neighbouring church, at Ingram, there is a still smaller fragment preserved, consisting of the feet only. Fortunately, dismemberment of this kind is exceptional.

Not many miles away, in the nave of Bothal Church, there may be seen very superb examples of similar sculptural art that have been well cared for. These are the effigies of Ralph, Lord Ogle, and Lady Margaret Gascoigne, executed in alabaster. The tomb on which they are placed is built against the south-east pier of the chancel arch, and is spanned by the first arch from the nave into

the aisle. There is a great castle in ruins within a good stone's-throw, and the church is very much out of repair, and partly buried in accumulations of soil, but these figures, with the suggestion their presence makes that they represent those who once lived in the one and worshipped in the other, when they were both at their best, form a centre of radiating interest. Before passing from this county, an effigy in chain armour may be mentioned that has lain for many centuries in Bamborough Church, which, though its own sculptural evidence shows it to be that of a mediæval knight, has drawn to itself so much out of the Arthurian legend (Bamborough is recognised as the Garde Joyeuse) as to be popularly known as Sir Lancelot.

Few village churches have more pathetic memorials than Astley Church, in the core of Warwickshire, where upon the floor, without sarcophagi, or bases, or protecting canopy or arched recesses, may be seen three stone effigies, one here, one there, and one further on, two of which represent the mother and father of Lady Jane Grey, and the third, which is shorter and slighter than either, as be seemed her youth, that unfortunate and uncrowned queen. These are also without heraldic devices, but the surpassing tragedy of their lives has kept their identity remembered.

Solitary effigies of females are not so general as those of knights, nevertheless they are not rare. In Haversham Church there is a monument in an arched recess to the memory of Elizabeth Lady Clinton, on which a life-sized effigy is placed. A cherub supports the pillow on which the head of the figure reposes, and an animal is placed at its feet. A veil of drapery is disposed over the head without covering the features, some of which have, unfortunately, had rough treatment. The hands are raised and folded; the robes are arranged in compact continuous lines. The sides of the monument are panelled, and in each panel are figures, chiefly angels bearing shields. In St. Austen's Church there is an instance in which a female is sculptured with a child by her side. In Alnwick Church there is an effigy of a female, wrought in the sandstone of the district, that has been detached from all association in its original position, but which from its costume is thought likely to represent the widow of the last of the De Vescies, the lords of Alnwick before the reign of the Percies. Moved about by energetic custodians, perhaps with a view to obtain more room for sittings, this figure, with two others, was placed on end for some time, but has more recently been

restored to its recumbent position. Effigies of wives associated with their husbands are, however, much more numerous. In Kings Carswell Church may be seen a memorial representing an individual of the Dinham family and his wife. The legs of this knight are not crossed, nor does he bear either sword or shield, though he has a helmet on his head and a gorget of mail round his neck. In both these figures the hands have been destroyed. The dame wears a head-dress of a coronet form, a bead necklace with a pendant, and closely fitting robes which fall in many folds about her feet. The heads of both personages rest on pillows that are smoothed or held by angels, of whom little more than the compassionate hands can now be made out. Of similar typical interest is a monument of a knight of the Fitz-Herbert family and his wife in Norbury Church, Derbyshire. The sides of this tomb are divided into six panels, in each of which are figures. On the flat top are two life-sized effigies. In this example the knight is bareheaded, and his hands are in an attitude of prayer. His wife wears a high and pointed head-dress, and a mantle kept in position over her robes by an ornamental pin. Two angels are shown at the heads of these figures and two animals at their feet.

There were three leading varieties of tombs in these old times: the stone sarcophagus or receptacle without an effigy; those with recumbent figures shown upon them; and the effigy placed flat on the ground without a visible tomb, like the splendid and solemn porphyry examples of the Knights-Templars still prone on the floor of the Round, or drum, in the Temple Church. Our cathedrals contain the greatest wealth in all these branches of funereal art. Beverley Minster, however, is allowed to possess the finest example in the Percy shrine. Tewkesbury Abbey church is extremely rich likewise. St. Bartholomew's Church, Smithfield, has the touching effigy of its founder, Rahere. Some of the most superb examples with effigies are to be seen in the tombs of our kings and queens in Westminster Abbey. King John's memorial in Worcester Cathedral is also a good specimen. Besides these three kinds there are the curious instances of small or miniature effigies representing adults in churches at Horsted-Keynes, Sussex; Curry-Rivell, Somerset; Tenbury, Worcestershire; Elford, Staffordshire; Mappowder, Dorsetshire; and Marlton, Devonshire. Probably these were the result of the same phase of feeling that led to the adoption of similar small dimensions for memorial brasses, and which speedily passed away. The counties

that appear to be specially enriched by the presence of life-sized ancient effigies in their sacred buildings are Yorkshire, Derbyshire; Cheshire, Devonshire, and Buckinghamshire. There are not very many that can be referred to an earlier date than 1250. The earliest are evidently those that are shown as clad in mail armour. In the case of the latter effigy of the Black Prince on his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral, his actual costume, so faithfully preserved, is reproduced with so much accuracy as to include the half of a fleur-de-lys in the embroidery on his jupon, which preciseness leads us to the conclusion that exactness in details was a point that was considered by the artists who made these memorials, and that probably they extended this care to a perpetuation of the features of their subjects.

Some of the effigies of later centuries, though not so pathetic as those of the inscrutable and nameless knights, are very striking. Even in Stratford-upon-Avon Church, where it might be taken for granted that all thought would be concentrated upon the grave and monument of Shakespeare, we cannot but be detained by the presentments of the Earl of Totnes, Commander-in-Chief in Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth, and his countess. These are in alabaster and coloured to represent life; and they lie in quiet sumptuous state in the Clopton Chapel in the north aisle. On the wall by the side of the tomb is a long panel with seven small figures sculptured upon it to portray their children, three of whom, from their swathing-clothes, evidently died in infancy; and on a panel, or tablet, above this are armorial bearings. In the same chapel is buried Sir Edward Walker, Garter King-at-Arms in the time of Charles I., whose epitaph came from the pen of Sir William Dugdale; and as we look upon all the emblematic details around us we feel that the heart of heraldry is spread out to our view, and that there is more to be deciphered in this unspoken language than is dreamt of by the possessors of only the ordinary amount of information concerning it. Another superbly rich Elizabethan tomb, in a much smaller edifice, is left to us in Boreham Church, Essex. This was erected to the memory of Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, Lord Chamberlain, and known as the stern opponent of Leicester. Three knights in martial costumes lie on the tomb-slab, one of which is his son and the other his grandson. Walpole incidentally states that the Earl bequeathed 1,500*l.* to be expended on this tomb, and that his executors agreed with a Dutch sculptor, Richard Stevens, to

execute his part of the work for 292*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.* The Earl and his son were first buried in the church of St. Laurence Pountney, in the metropolis, and then removed to Boreham at the instance of the grandson.

In addition to the large numbers of effigies that mark the last resting-places of military personages and civilians, there are many others that indicate those of the early clergy. In Ely Cathedral, for instance, there are venerable, hoary, and crumbling presentments of Hugh Northwold, Bishop of Ely in 1224, and of William de Kilkenny, Bishop of Ely in 1256. In Hereford Cathedral are two ancient effigies, the one of Peter de Aquablanca, who died Bishop of Hereford in 1260, and the other of James Aquablanca, Archdeacon, who died in 1320, both of which are of moment. And, not to catalogue too many examples, most of our cathedrals have similar relics.

Those of our readers who have already taken an interest in this subject, that is so far from us and yet so near in the lesson of the limits of man's remembrance, may be pleased to be reminded of it and of the knightly associations with which it is fraught; and those who have not yet looked at it may find it a mine full of agreeable investigations, and be glad that their attention has been directed to it.

THE SOWERS.

BY HENRY SETON MERRIMAN,

AUTHOR OF 'WITH EDGED TOOLS,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ANGLO-RUSSIAN.

At bedtime Catrina went to Maggie's room with her to see that she had all that she could desire. A wood fire was burning brightly in the open French stove; the room was lighted by lamps. It was warm and cheery. A second door led to the little music-room which Catrina had made her own, and beyond was her bedroom.

Maggie had assured her hostess that she had everything that she could wish, and that she did not desire the services of Catrina's maid. But the Russian girl still lingered. She was slow to make friends—not shy, but diffident and suspicious. Her friendship once secured was a thing worth possessing. She was inclined to bestow it upon this quiet, self-contained English girl. In such matters the length of an acquaintance goes for nothing. A long acquaintanceship does not necessarily mean friendship—one being the result of circumstance, the other of selection.

'The Princess knows Russian?' said Catrina suddenly.

She was standing near the dressing-table, where she had been absently attending to the candles. She wheeled round and looked at Maggie, who was hospitably sitting on a low chair near the fire. She was sorry for the loneliness of this girl's life. She did not want her to go away just yet. There was another chair by the fire, inviting Catrina to indulge in those maiden confidences which attach themselves to slippers and hair-brushings.

Maggie looked up with a smile which slowly ebbed away. Catrina's remark was of the nature of a defiance. Her half-diffident rôle of hostess was suddenly laid aside.

'No; she does not,' answered the English girl.

Catrina came forward, standing over Maggie, looking down at her with eyes full of antagonism.

'Excuse me. I saw her understand a remark I made to one of the servants. She was not careful. I saw it distinctly.'

'I think you must be mistaken,' answered Maggie quietly. 'She has been in Russia before for a few weeks; but she did not learn the language. She told me so herself. Why should she pretend not to know Russian if she does?'

Catrina made no answer. She sat heavily down in the vacant chair. Her attitudes were uncouth and strong—a perpetual source of tribulation to the Countess. She sat with her elbow on her knee, staring into the fire.

'I did not mean to hate her; I did not want to,' she said. 'If it had been you, I should not have hated you.'

Maggie's clear eyes wavered for a moment. A faint colour rose to her face. She leant back so that the firelight did not reach her. There was a silence, during which Maggie unclasped a bracelet with a little snap of the spring. Catrina did not hear the sound. She heard nothing. She did not appear to be aware of her surroundings. Maggie unclasped another bracelet noisily. She was probably regretting her former kindness of manner. Catrina had come too near.

'Are you not judging rather hastily?' suggested Maggie in a measured voice, which heightened the contrast between the two. 'I find it takes some time to discover whether one likes or dislikes new acquaintances.'

'Yes; but you English are so cold and deliberate. You do not know what it is to hate—or to care.'

'Perhaps we do,' said Maggie; 'but we say less about it.'

Catrina turned and looked at her with a queer smile.

'Less!' she laughed. 'Nothing—you say nothing. Paul is the same. I have seen. I know. You have said nothing since you came to Thors. You have talked and laughed; you have given opinions; you have spoken of many things, but you have said nothing. You are the same as Paul—one never knows. I know nothing about you. But I like you. You are her cousin?'

'Yes.'

'And I hate her.'

Maggie laughed. She was quite steady and loyal.

'When you get to know her you will change perhaps,' she said.

'Perhaps I know her now better than you do!'

Maggie laughed in her cheery, practical way.

'That seems hardly likely, considering that I have known her since we were children.'

Catrina shrugged her shoulders in an honest if somewhat mannerless refusal to discuss the side issue. She returned to the main question with characteristic stubbornness.

'I shall always hate her,' she said. 'I am sorry she is your cousin. I shall always regret that, and I shall always hate her. There is something wrong about her—something none of you know except Karl Steinmetz. He knows everything—Herr Steinmetz.'

'He knows a great deal,' admitted Maggie.

'Yes; and that is why he is sad. Is it not so?'

Catrina sat staring into the fire, her strange, earnest eyes almost fierce in their concentration.

'Did she pretend that she loved him at first?' she asked suddenly.

Receiving no answer, she looked up and fixed her searching gaze on the face of her companion. Maggie was looking straight in front of her in the direction of the fire, but not with eyes focussed to see anything so near at hand. She bore the scrutiny without flinching. As soon as Catrina's eyes were averted the mask-like stillness of her features relaxed.

'She does not take that trouble now,' added the Russian girl in reply to her own question. 'Did you see her to-night when we were at the piano? Monsieur de Chauxville was talking to her. They were keeping two conversations going at the same time. I could see by their faces. They said different things when the music was loud. I hate her. She is not true to Paul. Monsieur de Chauxville knows something about her. They have something in common which is not known to Paul or to any of us! Why do you not speak? Why do you sit staring into the fire with your lips so close together?'

'Because I do not think that we shall gain anything by discussing Paul and his wife. It is no business of ours.'

Catrina laughed—a lamentable, mirthless laugh.

'That is because she is your cousin; and he—he is nothing to you. You do not care whether he is happy or not.'

Catrina had turned upon her companion fiercely. Maggie swung round in her chair to pick up her bracelets, which had slipped from her knees to the floor.

'You exaggerate things,' she said quietly. 'I see no reason to

suppose that Paul is unhappy. It is because you have taken this unreasoning dislike to her.'

She took a long time to collect three bracelets. Then she rose and placed them on the dressing-table.

'Do you want me to go?' asked Catrina in her blunt way.

'No,' answered Maggie, civilly enough; but she extracted a couple of hair-pins rather obviously.

Catrina heeded the voice and not the action.

'You English are all alike,' she said. 'You hold one at arm's length. I suppose there is someone in England for whom you care—who is out of all this—away from all the troubles of Russia. This is nothing to do with your life. It is only a passing incident—a few weeks to be forgotten when you go back. I wonder what he is like—the man in England. You need not tell me. I am not curious in that way. I am not asking you to tell me. I am just wondering. For I know there is someone. I knew it when I first saw you. You are so quiet, and settled, and self-contained—like a person who has played a game and knows for certain that it is lost or won, and does not want to play again. Your hair is very pretty; you are very pretty, you quiet English girl. I wonder what you think about behind your steady eyes.'

'I,' said Maggie, with a little laugh. 'Oh—I think about my dresses, and the new fashions, and parties, and all the things that girls do think of.'

Catrina shook her head. She looked stubborn and unconvinced. Then suddenly she changed the conversation.

'Do you like Monsieur de Chauxville?' she asked.

'No.'

'Does Paul like him?'

'I don't know.'

Catrina looked up for a moment only. Then her eyes returned to the contemplation of the burning pine-logs.

'I wonder why you will not talk of Paul,' she said, in a voice requiring no answer.

Maggie moved rather uneasily. She had her back turned towards Catrina.

'I am afraid I am rather a dull person,' she answered. 'I have not much to say about anybody.'

'And nothing about Paul?' suggested Catrina.

'Nothing. We were talking of Monsieur de Chauxville.'

'Yes; I do not understand Monsieur de Chauxville. He

seems to me to be the incarnation of insincerity. He poses—even to himself. He is always watching for the effect. I wonder what the effect of himself upon himself may be.’

Maggie laughed.

‘That is rather complicated,’ she said. ‘It requires working out. I think he is deeply impressed with his own astuteness. If he were simpler, he would be cleverer.’

Catrina was afraid of Claude de Chauville, and because this was so she stared in wonder at the English girl, who dismissed him from the conversation and her thoughts with a few careless words of contempt. Such minds as that of Miss Delafield were quite outside the field of De Chauville’s influence, while that Frenchman had considerable power over highly-strung and imaginative natures.

Catrina Lanovitch had begun by tolerating him—had proceeded to make the serious blunder of permitting him to be impertinently familiar, and was now exaggerating in her own mind the hold that he had over her. She did not actually dislike him. So few people had taken the trouble or found the expediency of endeavouring to sympathise with her or understand her nature, that she was unconsciously drawn towards this man whom she now feared.

In exaggerating the power he exercised over herself she somewhat naturally exaggerated also his importance in the world and in the lives of those around him. She had imagined him all-powerful; and the first person to whom she mentioned his name dismissed the subject indifferently. Her own entire sincerity had enabled her to detect the insincerity of her ally. She had purposely made mention of the weak spot which she had discovered in order that her observation might be corroborated. And this Maggie had failed to do.

With the slightest encouragement Catrina would have told her companion all that had passed. The sympathy between women is so strong that there is usually only one man who is safe from discussion. In Catrina’s case that one man was not Claude de Chauville. But Maggie Delafield was of different material from this impressionable, impulsive Russian girl. She was essentially British in her capacity for steering a straight personal course through the shoals and quicksands of her neighbours’ affairs, as also in the firm grip she held upon her own thoughts. She was by no means prepared to open her mind to the first comer, and

in her somewhat slow-going English estimate of such matters Catrina was as yet little more than the first comer.

She changed the subject, and they talked for some time on indifferent topics—such topics as have an interest for girls; and who are we that we may despise them? We jeer very grandly at girls' talk, and promptly return to the discussion of our dogs and pipes and clothing.

But Catrina was not happy under this judicious treatment. She had no one in the world to whom she could impart a thousand doubts and questions—a hundred grievances and one great grief. And it was just this one great grief of which Maggie dreaded the mention. She was quite well aware of its existence—had been aware of it for some time. Karl Steinmetz had thrown out one or two vague hints; everything pointed to it. Maggie could hardly be ignorant of the fact that Catrina had grown to womanhood loving Paul.

A score of times Catrina approached the subject, and with imperturbable steadfastness Maggie held to her determination that Paul was not to be discussed by them. She warded, she evaded, she ignored with a skill which baffled the simple Russian. She had a hundred subterfuges—a hundred skilful turns and twists. Where women learn these matters, heaven only knows! All our experience of the world, our falls and stumbles on the broken road of life, never teach us some things that are known to the veriest schoolgirl standing on the smoother footpath that women tread.

At last Catrina rose to go. Maggie rose also. Women are relentless where they fight for their own secrets. Maggie morally turned Catrina out of the room. The two girls stood looking at each other for a moment. They had nothing in common. The language in which they understood each other best was the native tongue of neither. Born in different countries, each of a mixed race with no one racial strain in common, neither creed, nor education, nor similarity of thought had aught to draw them together. They looked at each other, and God's hand touched them. They both loved the same man. They did not hate each other.

'Have you everything you want?' asked Catrina.

The question was startling. Catrina's speech was ever abrupt. At first Maggie did not understand.

'Yes, thanks,' she answered. 'I am very tired. I suppose it is the snow.'

'Yes,' said Catrina mechanically; 'it is the snow.'

She went towards the door, and there she paused.

'Does Paul love her?' she asked abruptly.

Maggie made no answer; and, as was her habit, Catrina replied to her own question.

'You know he does not—you know he does not!' she said.

Then she went out, without waiting for an answer, closing the door behind her. The closed door heard the reply.

'It will not matter much,' said Maggie, 'so long as he never finds it out.'

CHAPTER XXX.

WOLF!

THE Countess Lanovitch never quitted her own apartments before mid-day. She had acquired a Parisian habit of being invisible until luncheon-time. The two girls left the Castle of Thors in a sleigh with one attendant at ten o'clock in order to reach the hut selected for luncheon by mid-day. Etta did not accompany them. She had a slight headache.

At eleven o'clock Claude de Chauville returned alone, on horseback. After the sportsmen had separated, each to gain his prearranged position in the forest, he had tripped over his rifle, seriously injuring the delicate sighting mechanism. He found (he told the servant who opened the door for him) that he had just time to return for another rifle before the operation of closing in on the bears was to begin.

'If Madame the Princess' was visible, he went on, would the servant tell her that Monsieur de Chauville was waiting in the library to assure her that there was absolutely no danger to be anticipated in the day's sport? The Princess, it would appear, was absurdly anxious about the welfare of her husband—an experienced hunter and a dead shot.

Claude de Chauville then went to the library, where he waited, booted, spurred, rifle in hand, for Etta.

After a lapse of five minutes or more, the door was opened, and Etta came leisurely into the room.

'Well?' she inquired indifferently.

De Chauville bowed. He walked past her and closed the door, which she happened to have left open.

Then he returned and stood by the window, leaning gracefully

on his rifle. His attitude, his hunting suit, his great top-boots, made rather a picturesque object of him.

'Well?' repeated Etta, almost insolently.

'It would have been wiser to have married me,' said De Chauxville, darkly.

Etta shrugged her shoulders.

'Because I understand you better; I *know* you better than your husband.'

Etta turned and glanced at the clock.

'Have you come back from the bear-hunt to tell me this, or to avoid the bears?' she asked.

De Chauxville frowned. A man who has tasted fear does not like a question of his courage.

'I have come to tell you that and other things,' he answered.

He looked at her with his sinister smile and a little upward jerk of the head. He extended his open hand, palm upwards, with the fingers slightly crooked.

'I hold you, Madame,' he said—'I hold you in my hand. You are my slave, despite your brave title; my thing, my plaything, despite your servants, and your great houses, and your husband! When I have finished telling you all that I have to tell, you will understand. You will perhaps thank me for being merciful.'

Etta laughed defiantly.

'You are afraid of Paul,' she cried. 'You are afraid of Karl Steinmetz; you will presently be afraid of me.'

'I think not,' said De Chauxville coolly. The two names just mentioned were certainly not of pleasant import in his ears, but he was not going to let a woman know that. This man had played dangerous cards before now. He was not at all sure of his ground. He did not know what Etta's position was in regard to Steinmetz. Behind the defiant woman there lurked the broad shadow of the man who never defied; who knew many things, but was ignorant of fear.

Unlike Karl Steinmetz, De Chauxville was not a bold player. He liked to be sure of his trick before he threw down his trump card. His method was not above suspicion. He liked to know what cards his adversary held, and one may be sure that he was not above peeping.

'Karl Steinmetz is no friend of yours,' he said.

Etta did not answer. She was thinking of the conversation she had with Steinmetz in Petersburg. She was wondering

whether the friendship he had offered—the solid thing as he called it—was better than the love of this man.

‘I have information now,’ went on De Chauxville, ‘which would have made you my wife had I had it sooner.’

‘I think not,’ said the lady insolently. She had dealt with such men before. Hers was the beauty that appealed to De Chauxville and such as he. It is not the beautiful women who see the best side of human nature.

‘Even now,’ went on the Frenchman, ‘now that I know you—I still love you. You are the only woman I shall ever love.’

‘Indeed,’ murmured the lady, quite unmoved.

‘Yes; although in a way I despise you—now that I know you.’

‘*Mon Dieu!*’ exclaimed Etta. ‘If you have anything to say, please say it. I have no time to probe your mysteries—to discover your parables. You know me well enough, perhaps, to be aware that I am not to be frightened by your cheap charlatanism.’

‘I know you well enough,’ retorted De Chauxville hoarsely, ‘to be aware that it was you who sold the Charity League papers to Vassili in Paris. I know you well enough, Madame, to be aware of your present position in regard to your husband. If I say a word in the right quarter you would never leave Russia alive. I have merely to say to Catrina Lanovitch that it was you who banished her father for your own gain. I have merely to hand your name in to certain of the Charity League party, and even your husband could not save you.’

He had gradually approached her, and uttered the last words face to face, his eyes close to hers. She held her head up—erect, defiant still.

‘So you see, Madame,’ he said, ‘you belong to me.’

She smiled.

‘Hand and foot,’ he added. ‘But I am soft-hearted.’

He shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

‘What will you?’ he said, looking out of the window. ‘I love you.’

‘Nonsense!’

He turned slowly round.

‘What?’

‘Nonsense,’ repeated Etta. ‘You love power; you are a bully. You love to please your own vanity by thinking that you have me in your power. I am not afraid of you.’

De Chauxville leant gracefully against the window. He still held his rifle.

'Reflect a little,' he said, with his cold smile. 'It would appear that you do not quite realise the situation. Women rarely realise situations in time. Our friend—your husband—has many of the English idiosyncrasies. He has all the narrow-minded notions of honour which obtain in that country. Added to this, I suspect him of possessing a truly Slavonic fire which he keeps under. "A smouldering fire——" you know, Madame, our French proverbs. He is not the man to take a rational and broad-minded view of your little transaction with Monsieur Vassili; more especially, perhaps, as it banished his friend Stepán Lanovitch—the owner of this house, by the way. His reception of the news I have to tell him would be unpleasant—for you.'

'What do you want?' interrupted Etta. 'Money?'

'I am not a needy adventurer.'

'And I am not such a fool, Monsieur de Chauxville, as to allow myself to be dragged into a vulgar intrigue, borrowed from a French novel, to satisfy your vanity.'

De Chauxville's dull eyes suddenly flashed.

'I will trouble you to believe, Madame,' he said, in a low concentrated voice, 'that such a thought never entered my head. A De Chauxville is not a commercial traveller, if you please. No; it may surprise you, but my feeling for you has more good in it than you would seem capable of inspiring. God only knows how it is that a bad woman can inspire a good love.'

Etta looked at him in amazement. She did not always understand De Chauxville. No matter for surprise, perhaps; for he did not always understand himself.

'Then what do you want?' she asked.

'In the meantime, implicit obedience.'

'What are you going to use me for?'

'I have ends,' replied Claude de Chauxville, who had regained his usual half-mocking composure, 'that you will serve. But they will be your ends as well as mine. You will profit by them. I will take very good care that you come to no harm, for you are the ultimate object of all this. At the end of it all I see only—you.'

Etta shrugged her shoulders. It is to be presumed that she was absolutely heartless. Many women are. It is when a heartless woman has brains that one hears of her.

'What if I refuse?' asked Etta, keenly aware of the fact that this man was handicapped by his love for her.

'Then I will force you to obedience.'

Etta raised her delicate eyebrows insolently.

'Ah!'

'Yes,' said De Chauville, with suppressed anger; 'I will force you to obey me.'

The Princess looked at him with her little mocking smile. She raised one hand to her head with a reflective air as if a hair-pin were of greater importance than his words. She had dressed herself rather carefully for this interview. She never for a moment overlooked the fact that she was a woman, and beautiful. She did not allow him to forget it either.

Her mood of outraged virtue was now suddenly thrown in the background by a phase of open coquetry. Beneath her eyelids she watched for the effect of her pretty, provoking attitude on the man who loved her. She was on her own territory at this work, playing her own game; and she was more alarmed by De Chauville's imperturbability than by anything he had said.

'You have a strange way of proving the truth of your own statements.'

'What statement?'

She gave a little laugh. Her attitude, her glance, the cunning display of a perfect figure, the laugh, the whole woman was the incarnation of practised coquetry. She did not admit, even to herself, that she was afraid of De Chauville. But she was playing her best cards, in her best manner. She had never known them fail.

Claude de Chauville was a little white about the lips. His eyelids flickered, but by an effort he controlled himself, and she did not see the light in his eyes for which she looked.

'If you mean,' he said coldly, 'the statement that I made to you before you were married—namely, that I love you—I am quite content to leave the proof till the future. I know what I am about, Madame.'

He took his watch from his pocket and consulted it.

'I must go in five minutes,' he said. 'I have a few instructions to give you, to which I must beg your careful attention.'

He looked up, meeting Etta's somewhat sullen gaze with a smile of triumph.

'It is essential,' he went on, 'that I be invited to Osterno. I do not want to stay there long; indeed, I do not care to. But I must see the place. I dare say you can compass the invitation, Madame?'

'It will be difficult.'

'And therefore worthy of your endeavour. I have the greatest regard for your diplomatic skill. I leave the matter in your hands, Princess.'

Etta shrugged her shoulders and looked past him out of the window. De Chauxville was considering her face carefully.

'Another point to be remembered,' he went on, 'is your husband's daily life at Osterno. The Prince is not above suspicion; the authorities are watching him. He is suspected of propagating revolutionary ideas among the peasantry. I should like you to find out as much as you can. Perhaps you know already. Perhaps he has told you, Princess. I know that beautiful face! He has told you! Good. Does he take an interest in the peasants?'

Etta did not answer.

'Kindly give me your attention, Madame. Does the Prince take an interest in the peasants?'

'Yes.'

'An active interest?'

'Yes.'

'Have you any details?'

'No,' answered Etta.

'Then you will watch him, and procure those details.'

Etta's face was defiant and pale. De Chauxville never took his eyes from it.

'I have undertaken a few small commissions for an old friend of yours, Monsieur Vassili, whom you obliged once before!' he said; and the defiance faded from her eyes.

'The authorities cannot, in these disturbed times, afford to tolerate princes of an independent turn of mind. Such men are apt to make the peasant think himself more important than he is. I dare say, Madame, that you are already tired of Russia. It might perhaps serve your ends if this country was made a little too hot for your husband, eh? I see your proud lips quivering, Princess! It is well to keep the lips under control. We, who deal in diplomacy, know where to look for such signs. Yes; I dare say I can get you out of Russia—for ever. But you must

be obedient. You must reconcile yourself to the knowledge that you have met—your master.'

He bowed in his graceful way, spreading out his hands in mock humility. Etta did not answer him. For the moment she could see no outlet to this maze of trouble, and yet she was conscious of not fearing De Chauville so much as she feared Karl Steinmetz.

'A lenient master,' pursued the Frenchman, whose vanity was tickled by the word. 'I do not ask much. One thing is to be invited to Osterno, that I may be near you. The other is a humble request for details of your daily life, that I may think of you when absent.'

Etta drew in her lips, moistening them as if they had suddenly become parched.

De Chauville glanced at her and moved towards the door. He paused with his fingers on the handle, and looking back over his shoulder he said:

'Have I made myself quite clear?'

Etta was still looking out of the window with hard, angry eyes. She took no notice of the question.

De Chauville turned the handle.

'Again let me impress upon you the advisability of implicit obedience,' he said, with delicate insolence. 'I mentioned the Charity League; but that is not my strongest claim upon your attention. I have another interesting little detail of your life, which I will reserve until another time.'

He closed the door behind him, leaving Etta white-lipped.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT.

A RUSSIAN forest in winter is one of Nature's places of worship. There are some such places in the world, where Nature seems to stand in the presence of the Deity: a sunrise at sea; night on a snow mountain; mid-day in a Russian forest in winter. These places and these times are good for convalescent atheists and such as pose as unbelievers—the cheapest form of notoriety.

Paul had requested Catrina and Maggie to drive as quietly as possible through the forest. The warning was unnecessary, for

the stillness of snow is infectious, while the beauty of the scene seemed to command silence. As usual, Catrina drove without bells. The one attendant on his perch behind was a fur-clad statue of servitude and silence. Maggie, leaning back, hidden to the eyes in her sables, had nothing to say to her companion. The way lay through forests of pine—trackless, motionless, virgin. The sun filtering through the snow-laden branches cast a subdued golden light upon the ruddy upright trunks of the trees. At times a willow-grouse, white as the snow, light and graceful on the wing, rose from the branch where he had been laughing to his mate with a low cooing laugh, and fluttered away over the trees.

‘A *kooropatká*,’ said Catrina, knowing the life of the forest almost as well as Paul, whose very existence was wrapped up in these things.

Far over the summits of the pines a snipe seemed to be wheeling a sentinel round. He followed them as they sped along, calling out all the while his deep warning note, like that of a lamb crouching beneath a hedge where the wind is not tempered.

Once or twice they heard the dismal howl of a wolf—the most melancholy, the weirdest, the most hopeless of Nature’s calls. The whole forest seemed to be on the alert—astir and in suspense. The wolf, disturbed in his lair, no doubt heard and understood the cry of the watchful snipe and the sudden silence of the willow-grouse, who loves to sit and laugh when all is safe. A clumsy capercailzie, swinging along over the trees with a great flap and rush of wings, seemed to be intent on his own solitary, majestic business—a very king among the fowls of the air.

Amidst the topmost branches of the pines the wind whispered and stirred like a child in sleep; but beneath all was still. Every branch stood motionless beneath its burden of snow. The air was thin, exhilarating, brilliant—like dry champagne. It seemed to send the blood coursing through the veins with a very joy of life.

Catrina noted all these things while cleverly handling her ponies. They spoke to her with a thousand voices. She had roamed in these same forests with Paul, who loved them and understood them as she did.

Maggie, in the midst as it were of a revelation, leant back and wondered at it all. She, too, was thinking of Paul. She understood him better now. This drive had revealed to her a part of his nature which had rather puzzled her—a large, simple, quiet

strength which had developed and grown to maturity beneath these trees. We are all part of what we have seen. We all carry with us through life somewhat of the scenes through which we passed in childhood.

Maggie knew now where Paul had learnt the quiet concentration of mind, the absorption in his own affairs, the complete lack of interest in the business of his neighbour which made him different from other men. He had learnt these things at first hand from God's creatures. These forest dwellers of fur and feather went about their affairs in the same absorbed way, with the same complete faith, the same desire to leave and be left alone. The simplicity of Nature was his. His only craft was forest craft.

'Now you know,' said Catrina when they reached the hut, 'why I hate Petersburg.'

Maggie nodded. The effect of the forest was still upon her. She did not want to talk.

The woman who received them, the wife of a keeper, had prepared in a rough way for their reception. She had a large fire and bowls of warm milk. The doors and windows had been thrown wide open by Paul's orders. He wanted to spare Maggie too intimate an acquaintance with a Russian interior. The hut was really a shooting-box built by Paul some years earlier, and inhabited by a head-keeper, one learned in the ways of bear and wolf and lynx. The large dwelling-room had been carefully scrubbed. There was a smell of pine wood and soap. The table, ready spread with a simple luncheon, took up nearly the whole of the room.

While the two girls were warming themselves, a keeper came to the door of the hut and asked to see Catrina. He stood in the little doorway, completely filling it, and explained that he could not come in as the buckles and straps of his snow-shoes were clogged and frozen. He wore the long Norwegian snow-shoes, and was held to be the quickest runner in the country.

Catrina had a long conversation with the man, who stood hatless, ruddy, and shy.

'It is,' she then explained to Maggie, 'Paul's own man, who always loads for him and carries his spare gun. He has sent him to tell us that the game has been ringed, and that the beaters will close in on a place called the Schapka Clearing, where there is a woodman's refuge. If we care to put on our snow-shoes, this man

will guide us to the clearing and take care of us till the battue is over.'

Of course Maggie welcomed the proposal with delight, and after a hasty luncheon the three glided off through the forest as noiselessly as they had come. After a tiring walk of an hour and more they came to the clearing and were duly concealed in the hut.

No one, the keeper told the ladies, except Paul knew of their presence in the little wooden house. The arrangements of the beat had been slightly altered at the last moment after the hunters had separated. The keeper lighted a small fire and shyly attended to the ladies, removing their snow-shoes with clumsy fingers. He closed the door, and arranged a branch of larch across the window so that they could stand near it without being seen.

They had not been there long before De Chauville appeared. He moved quickly across the clearing, skimming over the snow with long sweeping strides. Two keepers followed him, and after having shown him the rough hiding-place prepared for him, silently withdrew to their places. Soon Karl Steinmetz came from another direction, and took up his position rather nearer to the hut, in a thicket of pine and dwarf oak. He was only twenty yards away from the refuge where the girls were concealed.

It was not long before Paul came. He was quite alone, and suddenly appeared at the far end of the clearing, in very truth a mighty hunter, standing nearly seven feet on his snow-shoes. One rifle he carried in his hand, another slung across his back. It was like a silent scene on a stage. The snow-white clearing, with long-drawn tracks across it where the snow-shoes had passed, the still trees, the brilliant sun, and the blue depths of the forest behind; while Paul—like the hero of some grim Arctic saga—a huge fur-clad Northern giant, stood alone in the desolation.

From his attitude it was apparent that he was listening. It was probable that the cries of the birds and the distant howl of a wolf told his practised ears how near the beaters were. He presently moved across to where De Chauville was hidden, spoke some words of advice or warning to him, and pointed with his gloved hand in the direction whence the game might be expected to come.

As a matter of fact Paul was asking De Chauville the whereabouts of Steinmetz, who had gained his place of con-

cealment unobserved by either. De Chauville could give him no information, and Paul went away to his post dissatisfied. Karl Steinmetz must have seen them; he must have divined the subject of their conversation; but he remained hidden and gave no sign.

Paul's post was behind a fallen tree, and the watchers in the hut could see him, while he was completely hidden from any animal that might enter the open clearing from the far end. He turned and looked hard at the hut; but the larch branch across the window effectually prevented him from discovering whether anyone was behind it or not.

Thus they all waited in suspense. A blackcock skimmed across the open space and disappeared unmolested. A wolf—grey, gaunt, sneaking and lurching in his gait—trotted into the clearing and stood listening with evil lips drawn back. The two girls watched him breathlessly. When he trotted on unmolested they drew a deep breath as if they had been under water. Paul, with his two rifles laid before him, watched the wolf depart with a smile. The girls could see the smile, and from it learnt somewhat of the man. The keeper beside them gave a little laugh and looked to the hammers of his rifle.

And still there was no sound. It was still, unreal, and like a scene on the stage. The birds skimming over the tops of the trees from time to time threw in as it were, a note of fear and suspense. There was breathlessness in the air. A couple of hares, like white shadows in their spotless winter coats, shot from covert to covert across the open ground.

Then suddenly the keeper gave a little grunt and held up his hand, listening with parted lips and eager eyes. There was a distinct sound of breaking branches and crackling underwood.

They could see Paul cautiously rise from his knees to a crouching attitude. They followed the direction of his gaze, and before them the monarch of these forests stood in clumsy might. A bear had shambled to the edge of the clearing and was standing upright, growling and grumbling to himself, his great paws waving from side to side, his shaggy head thrust forward with a recurring jerk singularly suggestive of a dandy with an uncomfortable collar. These bears of Northern Russia have not the reputation of being very fierce unless they are aroused from their winter quarters, when their wrath knows no bounds and their courage recognises no danger. An angry bear is afraid of no living man or beast.

Moreover, these kings of the Northern forests are huge beasts, capable of smothering a strong man by falling on him and lying there—a death which has come to more than one daring hunter. The beast's favourite method of dealing with his foe is to claw him to death, or else hug him till his ribs are snapped and crushed into his vitals.

The bear stood poking his head and looking about with little, fiery, bloodshot eyes for something to destroy. His rage was manifest, and in his strength he was a grand sight. The majesty of power and a dauntless courage were his.

It was De Chauville's shot, and, while keeping his eye on the bear, Paul glanced impatiently over his shoulder from time to time, wondering why the Frenchman did not fire. The bear was a huge one, and would probably carry three bullets and still be a dangerous adversary.

The keeper muttered impatiently.

They were watching Paul breathlessly. The bear was approaching him. It would not be safe to defer firing another second.

Suddenly the keeper gave a short exclamation of astonishment and threw up his rifle.

There was another bear behind Paul, shambling towards him, unseen by him. All his attention was riveted on the huge brute forty yards in front of him. It was Claude de Chauville's task to protect Paul from any flank or rear attack; and Claude de Chauville was peering over his covert watching with blanched face the second bear, and lifting no hand, making no sign. The bear was within a few yards of Paul, who was crouching behind the fallen pine and now raising his rifle to his shoulder.

In a flash of comprehension the two girls saw all, through the panes of the closed window. It was still singularly like a scene on the stage. The second bear raised his powerful fore-paws as he approached. One blow would tear open Paul's brain.

A terrific report sent the girls staggering back, for a moment paralysing thought. The keeper had fired through the window, both barrels almost simultaneously. It was a question how much lead would bring the bear down before he covered the intervening dozen yards. In the confined space of the hut, the report of the heavy double charge was like that of a cannon; moreover, Steinmetz, twenty yards away, had fired at the same moment.

The room was filled with smoke. The two girls were blinded for an instant. Then they saw the keeper tear open the door and

disappear. The cold air through the shattered casement was a sudden relief to their lungs, choked with sulphur and the fumes of spent powder.

In a flash they were out of the open door; and there again, with the suddenness of a panorama, they saw another picture—Paul kneeling in the middle of the clearing taking careful aim at the retreating form of the first bear. They saw the puff of blue smoke rise from his rifle, they heard the sharp report; and the bear rolled over on its face.

Steinmetz and the keeper were walking towards Paul. Claude de Chauxville, standing outside his screen of brushwood, was staring with wide, fear-stricken eyes at the hut which he had thought empty. He did not know that there were three people behind him, watching him. What had they seen? What had they understood?

Catrina and Maggie ran towards Paul. They were on snowshoes, and made short work of the intervening distance.

Paul had risen to his feet. His face was grave. There was a singular gleam in his eyes, which was not a gleam of mere excitement such as the chase brings into some men's eyes.

Steinmetz looked at him and said nothing. For a moment Paul stood still. He looked round him, noting with experienced glance the lay of the whole incident—the dead form of the bear ten yards behind his late hiding-place, one hundred and eighty yards from the hut, a hundred and sixty yards from the spot whence Karl Steinmetz had sent his unerring bullet through the bear's brain. Paul saw it all. He measured the distances. He looked at De Chauxville, standing white-faced at his post, not fifty yards from the carcass of the second bear.

Paul seemed to see no one but De Chauxville. He went straight towards him, and the whole party followed in breathless suspense. Steinmetz was nearest to him, watching with his keen, quiet eyes.

Paul went up to De Chauxville and took the rifle from his hands. He opened the breech and looked into the barrels. They were clean; the rifle had not been fired off.

He gave a little laugh of contempt, and, throwing the rifle at De Chauxville's feet, turned abruptly away.

It was Catrina who spoke.

'If you had killed him,' she said, 'I would have killed you!'

Steinmetz picked up the rifle, closed the breech, and handed it to De Chauxville with a queer smile.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A CLOUD.

WHEN the Osterno party reached home that same evening the Starosta was waiting to see Steinmetz. His news was such that Steinmetz sent for Paul, and the three men went together to the little room beyond the smoking-room in the old part of the castle.

'Well?' said Paul, with the unconscious *hauteur* which made him a prince to these people.

The Starosta spread out his hands.

'Your Excellency,' he answered, 'I am afraid.'

'Of what?'

The Starosta shrugged his narrow shoulders in cringing deprecation.

'Excellency, I do not know. There is something in the village—something in the whole country. I know not what it is. It is a feeling—one cannot see it, one cannot define it; but it is there, like the gleam of water at the bottom of a deep well. The moujiks are getting dangerous. They will not speak to me. I am suspected. I am watched.'

His shifty eyes, like black beads, flitted from side to side as he spoke. He was like a weasel at bay. It was the face of a man who went in bodily fear.

'I will go with you down to the village now,' said Paul. 'Is there any excuse—any illness?'

'Ah, Excellency,' replied the chief, 'there is always that excuse.'

Paul looked at the clock.

'I will go now,' he said. He began his simple preparations at once.

'There is dinner to be thought of,' suggested Steinmetz with a resigned smile. 'It is half-past seven.'

'Dinner can wait,' replied Paul in English. 'You might tell the ladies that I have gone out, and will dine alone when I come back.'

Steinmetz shrugged his broad shoulders.

'I think you are a fool,' he said, 'to go alone. If they discover your identity they will tear you to pieces.'

'I am not afraid of them,' replied Paul, with his head in the

medicine cupboard, 'any more than I am afraid of a horse. They are like horses; they do not know their own strength.'

'With this difference,' added Steinmetz, 'that the moujik will one day make the discovery. He is beginning to make it now. The Starosta is quite right, Paul. There is something in the air. It is about time that you took the ladies away from here and left me to manage it alone.'

'That time will never come again,' answered Paul. 'I am not going to leave you alone again.'

He was pushing his arms into the sleeves of the old brown coat reaching to his heels, a garment which commanded as much love and respect in Osterno as ever would an angel's wing.

Steinmetz opened the drawer of his bureau and laid a revolver on the table.

'At all events,' he said, 'you may as well have the wherewithal to make a fight of it, if the worst comes to the worst.'

'As you like,' answered Paul, slipping the firearm into his pocket.

The Starosta moved away a pace or two. He was essentially a man of peace.

Half an hour later it became known in the village that the Moscow Doctor was in the house of one Ivan Krass, where he was prepared to see all patients who were not suffering from infectious complaints. The door of this cottage was soon besieged by the sick and the idle, while the Starosta stood in the doorway and kept order.

Within, in the one dwelling-room of the cottage, were assembled as picturesque and as unsavoury a group as the most enthusiastic modern 'slummer' could desire to see.

Paul, standing by the table with two paraffin lamps placed behind him, saw each suppliant in turn, and all the while he kept up a running conversation with the more intelligent, some of whom lingered on to talk and watch.

'Ah, John the son of John,' he would say, 'what is the matter with you? It is not often I see you. I thought you were clean and thrifty.'

To which John the son of John replied that the winter had been hard and fuel scarce, that his wife was dead and his children stricken with influenza.

'But you have had relief; our good friend the Starosta——'

'Does what he can,' grumbled John, 'but he dare not do much.'

The bárins will not let him. The nobles want all the money for themselves. The Emperor is living in his palace, where there are fountains of wine. We pay for that with our taxes. You see my hand—I cannot work; but I must pay the taxes, or else we shall be turned out into the street.'

Paul, while attending to the wounded hand—an old story of an old wound neglected, and a constitution with all the natural healing power drained out of it by hunger and want and vodka—Paul, ever watchful, glanced round and saw sullen, lowering faces, eager eyes, hungry, cruel lips.

'But the winter is over now. You are mistaken about the nobles. They do what they can. The Emperor pays for the relief that you have had all these months. It is foolish to talk as you do.'

'I only tell the truth,' replied the man, wincing as Paul deliberately cut away the dead flesh. 'We know now why it is that we are all so poor.'

'Why?' asked Paul, pouring some lotion over a wad of lint and speaking indifferently.

'Because the nobles——' began the man, and some one nudged him from behind, urging him to silence.

'You need not be afraid of me,' said Paul. 'I tell no tales, and I take no money.'

'Then why do you come?' asked a voice in the background. 'Some one pays you; who is it?'

'Ah, Tula,' said Paul, without looking up. 'You are there, are you? The great Tula. There is a hardworking, sober man, my little fathers, who never beats his wife, and never drinks, and never borrows money. A useful neighbour! What is the matter with you, Tula? You have been too sparing with the vodka, no doubt. I must order you a glass every hour.'

There was a little laugh. But Paul, who knew these people, was quite alive to the difference of feeling towards himself. They still accepted his care, his help, his medicine; but they were beginning to doubt him.

'There is your own Prince,' he went on fearlessly to the man whose hand he was binding up. 'He will help you when there is real distress.'

An ominous silence greeted this observation.

Paul raised his head and looked round. In the dim light of the two smoky lamps he saw a ring of wild faces. Men with

shaggy beards and hair all entangled and unkempt, with fierce eyes and lowering glances; women with faces that unsexed them. There were despair and desperation and utter recklessness in the air, in the attitude, in the hearts of these people. And Paul had worked among them for years. The sight would have been heart-breaking had Paul Howard-Alexis been the sort of man to admit the possibility of a broken heart. All that he had done had been frustrated by the wall of heartless bureaucracy against which he had pitched his single strength. There was no visible progress. These were not the faces of men and women moving up the social scale by the aid of education and the deeper self-respect that follows it. Some of them were young, although they hardly looked it. They were young in years, but old in life and misery. Some of them he knew to be educated. He had paid for the education himself. He had risked his own personal freedom to procure it for them, and misery had killed the seed.

He looked on this stony ground, and his stout heart was torn with pity. It is easy to be patient in social economy when that vague jumble of impossible ideas is calmly discussed across the dinner-table. But the result seems hopelessly distant when the mass of the poor and wretched stand before one in the flesh.

Paul knew that this little room was only a specimen of the whole of Russia. Each of these poor peasants represented a million—equally hopeless, equally powerless to contend with an impossible taxation.

He could not give them money, because the tax-collector had them all under his thumb and would exact the last kopeck. The question was far above his single-handed reach, and he did not dare to meet it openly and seek the assistance of the few fellow-nobles who faced the position without fear.

He could not see in the brutal faces before him one spark of intelligence, one little gleam of independence and self-respect which could be attributed to his endeavour, which the most sanguine construction could take as resulting from his time and money given to a hopeless cause.

Well,' he said. 'Have you nothing to tell me of your Prince?'

'You know him,' answered the man who had spoken from the safe background. 'We need not tell you.'

'Yes,' answered Paul; 'I know him.'

He would not defend himself.

'There,' he went on, addressing the man whose hand was now bandaged. 'You will do. Keep clean and sober, and it will heal. Get drunk and go dirty, and you will die. Do you understand, Ivan Ivanovitch?'

The man grunted sullenly, and moved away to give place to a woman with a baby in her arms.

Paul glanced into her face. He had known her a few years earlier a happy child playing at her mother's cottage door.

She drew back the shawl that covered her child with a faint, far-off gleam of pride in her eyes. There was something horribly pathetic in the whole picture. The child-mother, her rough, unlovely face lighted for a moment with that gleam from Paradise which men never know; the huge man bending over her, and between them the wizened, disease-stricken little waif of humanity.

'When he was born he was a very fine child,' said the mother.

Paul glanced at her. She was quite serious. She was looking at him with a strange pride on her face. Paul nodded and drew aside the shawl. The baby was staring at him with wise, grave eyes, as if it could have told him a thing or two if it had only been gifted with the necessary speech. Paul knew that look. It meant starvation.

'What is it?' asked the child-mother. 'It is only some little illness, is it not?'

'Yes; it is only a little illness.'

He did not add that no great illness is required to kill a small child. He was already writing something in his pocket-book. He tore the leaf out and gave it to her.

'This,' he said, 'is for you—yourself, you understand? Take that each day to the Starosta and he will give you what I have written down. If you do not eat all that he gives you and drink what there is in the bottle as he directs you, the baby will die—you understand? You must give nothing away; nothing even to your husband.'

The next patient was the man whose voice had been heard from the safe retreat of the background. His dominant malady was obvious. A shaky hand, an unsteady eye, and a bloated countenance spoke for themselves. But he had other diseases more or less developed.

'So you have no good to tell of your Prince,' said Paul, looking into the man's face.

'Our Prince, Excellency! He is not our Prince. His forefathers seized this land; that is all.'

'Ah! Who has been telling you that?'

'No one,' grumbled the man. 'We know it; that is all.'

'But you were his father's serfs, before the freedom. Let me see your tongue. Yes; you have been drinking—all the winter. Ah! is not that so, little father; your parents were serfs before the freedom.'

'Freedom!' growled the man. 'A pretty freedom! We were better off before.'

'Yes; but the world interfered with serfdom, because it got its necessary touch of sentiment. There is no sentiment in starvation.'

The man did not understand. He grunted acquiescence nevertheless. The true son of the people is always ready to grunt acquiescence to all that sounds like abuse.

'And what is this Prince like? Have you seen him?' went on Paul.

'No; I have not seen him. If I saw him I would kick his head to pieces.'

'Ah, just open your mouth a little wider. Yes; you have a nasty throat there. You have had diphtheria. So you would kick his head to pieces. Why?'

'He is a *tchinovnik*—a Government spy. He lives on the taxes. But it will not be for long. There is a time coming—'

'Ah! What sort of a time? Now you must take this to the Starosta. He will give you a bottle. It is not to drink. It is to wash your throat with. Remember that, and do not give it to your wife by way of a tonic as you did last time. So there are changes coming, are there?'

'There is a change coming for the Prince—for all the princes,' replied the man in the usual tap-room jargon. 'For the Emperor too. The poor man has had enough of it. God made the world for the poor man as well as for the rich. Riches should be equally divided. They are going to be. The country is going to be governed by a Mir. There will be no taxes. The Mir makes no taxes. It is the *tchinovniks* who make the taxes and live on them.'

'Ah, you are very eloquent, little father. If you talk like this in the kabák no wonder you have a bad throat. There, I can do no more for you. You must wash more and drink less. You

might try a little work perhaps ; it stimulates the appetite. And with a throat like that I should not talk so much if I were you. Next.'

The next comer was afflicted with a wound that would not heal—a common trouble in cold countries. While attending to this sickening sore Paul continued his conversation with the last patient.

'You must tell me,' he said, 'when these changes are about to come. I should like to be there to see. It will be interesting.'

The man laughed mysteriously.

'So the government is to be by a Mir, is it ?' went on Paul.

'Yes ; the poor man is to have a say in it.'

'That will be interesting. But at the Mir everyone talks at once and no one listens ; is it not so ?'

The man made no reply.

'Is the change coming soon ?' asked Paul coolly.

But there was no reply. Some one had seized the loquacious orator of the kabák, and he was at that moment being quietly hustled out of the room.

After this there was a sullen silence, which Paul could not charm away, charm he never so wisely.

When his patients had at last ebbed away he lighted a cigarette and walked thoughtfully back to the castle. There was danger in the air, and this was one of those men upon whom danger acts as a pleasant stimulant.

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